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MADONNA DI SAN SISTO

RAPHAEL

Royal Gallery, Dresden

SCHOOLS OF PAINTING

BY

MARY INNES

WITH SEVENTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS

SIXTH EDITION



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PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION

AS a foreword to this new edition of an old book I am anxious to remind my readers at the outset that it is from the point of view of a lover of these great Art-treasures bequeathed to us by the centuries rather than as a critic of technical processes and devices that I approach the subject. It is not only with what we may call the Language of Art that we are concerned—though that, like grammar in relation to literature—has its importance and value; it is the “psychic content” expressed by language that has been chiefly studied in this book.

Looking back to pre-historic times we find Man seeking to communicate with his fellow-man by an appeal to the eye. The figures scrawled on the walls of his dark cave preceded in all probability the utterance of intelligible speech. He was at first only partially Man. “I think, therefore I am” expresses advance in the scale of being—and for that reason Art is inalienably allied with History. It speaks to the mind, as well as to the eye.

The story of the development of Art in various countries and in various periods has, when regarded as a human document, an interest distinct from the sudden emotional delight aroused by the contemplation of one isolated example of art-achievement. But the man who created that work of art, and the land which gave him birth, and most certainly the period in which he lived are all clearly indicated in the finished product. This truth is expressed

with admirable precision by Mr. Vernon Blake in his new book, *The Relation of Art*: "It is the transcript of the mentality of a period". And more besides; there is a closer tie between us and the creator of a picture, for it is also the transcript of the mentality of a person. Therefore I may continue here in the words of my original preface to this book. This short historical sketch aims at marshalling the best known painters in orderly procession. It does not attempt to institute a roll-call of the entire vast host of the world's Great Masters; nor does it give an encyclopædic inventory of the works of any one of them. Personal selection and rejection have been freely exercised in order to secure space for the fuller presentment of a few leading figures. To facilitate closer acquaintance with the work of each painter, special attention is directed to any characteristic examples in the National Gallery. To give a wider range of acquaintance with famous pictures the illustrations are chiefly from foreign galleries. The historical tables are added as a help to visualizing the time-relations between one school and another. They are brought up only to 1850. But two short Appendices are now added which treat of later Movements.

Of the recent changes here and abroad, the return to Belgium of the lost panels of *The Mystic Lamb* (p. 137) is the most important. Our own National Gallery has been enriched by the Mond bequest. Three of these pictures, an early Raphael (No. 3943), a Fra Bartolommeo (No. 3914), and a beautiful Luini (No. 3936), strike me as specially interesting. The Tate Gallery is continually acquiring new works, particularly those of the modern French and English Schools.

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SCHOOLS OF PAINTING

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE short, unpretending word Art covers in meaning a vast section of human experience. A full history of art would cover the same ground as a history of the world, and anything like a complete study of the subject might well occupy a lifetime.

In this book we deal only with a small portion of our art-inheritance ; with the famous pictures left to us by past generations, and with the men who created them ; men of such fine artistic gifts and such a high degree of imagination that they are known as the Great Masters. Their works, if rightly studied, may become a source of ever-increasing enjoyment throughout the whole of life, and we suggest a few ways in which to approach the subject.

The first step is the construction of an historical framework in which to set, in its true perspective, each fresh item of information acquired. To this end, the table is supplied (p. 284) which shows the development of art simultaneously in various countries. We regard Time, the intangible region which is being traversed by men, as a kind of space, and mark on our chart the life-lines of the most prominent artists. We are thus able to trace the rise of art in Italy, soon followed by a like beginning in Flanders ; later follow the Germans and Dutch ; and last of all, the Spanish, French, and English.

But in order to study pictures we must be able to see them. Reproductions in black and white should be regarded as an accessible collection of pictures.

as exceedingly poor substitutes, mere memoranda to recall what has been seen already, or to prepare for what is to be seen in the future. To understand a painter's work, it is self-evident that we must read his script in paint. The illustrations of this book are intended to whet the appetite for the original pictures, and as soon as possible those described only in words should be seen by the student. An accessible collection of pictures is therefore a primary necessity, and there is no better training school to be found anywhere than in our own National Gallery in London. It contains perhaps the most representative collection in Europe; for we have examples of every school of painting, and of nearly every well-known master. Despite the fact that only a few rank as masterpieces, the average merit of the pictures is extraordinarily high.

In the
National
Gallery

Those who attack their subject with scholarly thoroughness will no doubt work through room after room as arranged by the Keeper. They will win an ample reward; the human interest of such a tour of inspection is absorbing, and the recent changes in the hanging of the pictures are most helpful to the historical mind. We are able to trace the whole story of art-development, not only in one country after another, but also in the pictures of one man. We see in many cases the work of master and pupil side by side, and can verify by observation what we have learned from books.

Individual
taste

But the more artistic way of learning about pictures is to let our individual taste guide us at first, and, with reckless devotion, to spend all our time over the few pictures which really charm us. It is best to feel first and to reflect afterwards. Preconceived notions very often act as a barrier between us and the sense-impressions, which should be the first to be conveyed by a picture. That is why the Old Masters do not easily win those who are better acquainted with modern art; these pictures from a past age are like foreigners in outlandish costumes upon whom British conservatism looks askance. But if among the multitude of oddities the eye can discover some pleasing exceptions, then the work of reconciliation has begun.

Foreign
galleries

We shall be ready then for the Continent, where further trea-

tures await us. If before leaving England we know something about the Great Masters, and they have opened for us (in a way they have) the eyes of our imagination, then in every foreign gallery we shall feel at home. In every direction familiar names will greet us, and new examples of their work. We shall learn to know better the masters we already love, and shall meet others with whom we wish to become acquainted. "Art is long," says the proverb, "and life is short." We may pursue our favourite painters from gallery to gallery without any fear that we shall come to an end of their inexhaustible freshness of charm. Nor shall we easily compass the mere visiting of galleries. There are rich collections in Paris, Madrid, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Berlin, Vienna, Dresden, Munich, and even so far away as St. Petersburg, and America; not to mention Italy, where pictures seem to spring up like flowers all over the land. It is only the professional *connoisseur* who can hope to see all the beautiful paintings about which we others can only read and dream.

Connoisseurship is a profession of rather recent growth. The Italian critic, Morelli, may be regarded as its founder. By the close study of small tricks of manner he professed to be able to fix with accuracy the authorship of almost any given picture. A certain droop of the eyelid, or curve of the finger-nail, or formation of the lobe of the ear was to him a secret but infallible token. And others who have learned to study pictures with the same exact observation of minute details have found the method successful. The debt owed by us all to the patient industry of connoisseurs is very great; for they are gradually correcting the mistakes of a past age, and verifying every new fact discovered by scientific demonstration. A knowledge of their work is invaluable to the exact student, but it has clearly no connection with the appreciation of beauty in works of art to which we apply the term "taste". There is many a scholar—to illustrate from another art—who can give a learned explanation of every line in *Lycidas* without ever knowing, as Dr. Johnson's friend Mrs. Thrale did, the thrill of delight in its beauty which brings tears to the eyes. If we know this thrill in the presence of great pictures we need not covet the scientific

knowledge—often very dearly bought—of the connoisseur. But we shall go to him for instruction, and where taste and knowledge are combined (as in the writings of Mr. Berenson among others) we shall find inspiration too.

Form and
theme

We must bear in mind that in every work of art there are two factors: not only the outward presentation but also the inward thought which called it forth into being. We speak of these as the *form* and the *theme*. In pictures the form is achieved by the use of colour, of lines, and the distribution of light and shade known as *chiaroscuro*. The form appeals to the eye and makes an impression on the senses; the theme is addressed to the mind, and sometimes does not at once unfold its meaning. Yet we only half understand a picture if we confine ourselves to what offers itself to the eye.

The inter-
pretation of
pictures

At the same time the interpretation of a painter's theme is a subject beset with danger. In very early pictures we have a clue in the symbolism which was universally accepted, and only by the aid of this clue can we hope to understand their meaning. The trend of modern criticism is in favour of explaining technical methods rather than treating of the essential life, the soul, as we may say, of a picture. Modern critics seem to adopt, almost unconsciously, the scientific attitude even when contemplating a work of art.

"A picture is painted for the eye and not for the mind" is an axiom with many. Yet the eye which has ceased to be an organ of mind must be a poor possession; and we question whether any great artists were thus maimed. The impression left on the memory by great pictures is no mere sense-experience, but a revelation to one's own mind of the forces at work in another mind. By imagination those pictures were created, and by the exercise of imagination they must be read. We may venture to adapt Wordsworth's words and say of this mental faculty:

'It is the fountain-light of all our day,
It is the master-light of all our seeing.'

Ruskin's
art-
criticism

We must not give our confidence to every self-appointed interpreter, but no student of pictures can afford to dispense

with the guidance of Ruskin. He was a true seer, and although he occasionally stumbled through over-eagerness, he carries a light in his hand which still illuminates the darker problems of interpretation. He recognized imagination as the source of genius, and he trusted his own imagination when it responded to the appeal made by the painter. His writings are full of the most suggestive reasonings about what constitutes beauty, and how best we may learn to recognize it. He does not confine himself to outward beauties of technique, although he sees them with intense appreciation ; he pierces nearly always below the surface and shows us something of the mental and moral attitude revealed by a painter in his pictures. He sometimes made mistakes, it is true ; he had hard and fast theories which do not always fit with facts, but he recognized rightly that beneath the unconscious impulses of the artist there works the conscious mind of a man.

The student who follows Ruskin as an enlightener of the eyes of the imagination, and at the same time consults the writings of connoisseurs as a corrective on points of historical or technical fact, is not likely, during the gradual cultivation of his taste, to fall into any serious blunders.

But, valuable as are the services of a guide, the only sure way to cultivate taste is by the exercise of a fearless sincerity. ^{Need for} sincerity To adopt the opinions of another as to what we feel or ought to feel is an absurdity in terms. Feeling is a private and very real experience ; the pretence of feeling is a peculiarly dangerous form of untruth. The honest, perfectly truthful beginner in the study of pictures will like and dislike with violence, and in that condition of mind lies salvation. Nothing paralyses more effectually the growing perception of beauty in works of art than the cant phrases which are so often caught up and repeated before their meaning is understood. But a simple, unbiassed, leisurely readiness to accept what the painter has to show us will lead in time to a growth of insight. We must be passive in order that we may feel ; and it is in the power of evoking feeling that lies the mystery—the communicated, haunting sense of mystery which marks every great work of art

The cultivation of taste

As our knowledge and receptivity increase we shall find that we grow less intolerant of the things which at first we did not like. Our taste will tend to become catholic. But it is likely that a personal bias will always enter into our estimate of the pictures submitted to our notice. There is no need to be afraid of this. It is natural that those painters who express for us our own ideals and aspirations should claim our warmest allegiance. But we should desire to advance further, and to perceive new truths which greater minds than our own have to reveal. Then gradually will come the discovery that nearly all must be in agreement about those pictures which are truly the best. A book like this tells beforehand the general verdict about each, but the reader should not unthinkingly acquiesce. There should be at each step a verifying of opinions given, and an effort to defend intelligently every personal preference. Taste is a matter of slow growth; it consists at first in unconscious feeling, then the attention is directed to the feeling; and at last we reach the knowledge of what we feel, and why we feel it.

Enjoyment of pictures

It is in order to be able to enjoy that we wish to cultivate taste. All art is the product of joy, of the wish to create beautiful things and to show them to others. Ruskin calls every picture "an act of praise". The simplest and greatest are very truly so described; they spring spontaneously from the heart of the artist as song pours forth from the quivering breast of the bird. But man, the higher creature, offers a nobler form of praise in which mind and will are exercised. And he makes his praise permanent, so that others may rejoice with him, and the whole world may be happier than it was before.

As an interpretation of life Professor Sharpe, writing under the pseudonym of Fiona Macleod, offers us an even more penetrating criticism: "Art is pellucid mystery, and the only spiritually logical interpretation of life; and her inevitable language is symbol—by which (whether in colour, or form, or sound, or word, or, however the symbol be translated) a spiritual image illumines a reality that the material fact narrows and obscures."¹

¹ From *The Divine Adventure* (note, p. 415).

CHAPTER II

ON SYMBOLISM

WE must know something about symbols if we are to understand the earliest Christian art, because they were much employed during the first twelve or thirteen centuries of the Christian era.

A symbol is a sign which stands for some particular person, ^{Symbols} or some abstract thought which cannot be represented to the eye. Any object may be used as a symbol provided we know beforehand the fixed meaning it is to bear. For instance, a lily is the symbol, or emblem, of purity; the lamb, of meekness and innocence; the rose, of love. There is a natural fitness here between the symbol and the thing signified. But in Christian art a large number of arbitrary symbols are used, and we cannot possibly guess their meaning unless previously instructed. Some of them are quite easy to remember and recognize, and nearly all are connected with objects of the Christian faith with which we are familiar.

Heaven is symbolized by the segment of a circle, sometimes of pure blue, sometimes edged with the three colours of the rainbow. In dealing with the three persons of the Trinity, ^{Persons of the Trinity} the most frequent symbol adopted to represent God the Father is a hand protruding from the heaven of blue. The Holy Spirit is symbolized by a dove.

God the Son is represented under many different figures, perhaps the strangest is the mysterious-looking sign **☩**. This is really a monogram composed of the first two Greek letters of the name of Christ, **X** and **P**. The **X** is also intended

to represent the Cross, the universal symbol of the faith. This monogram sometimes appears in slightly different forms as **P**, **ρ** and **✠**. But this mark is a hieroglyph rather than a true symbol. Among the more properly artistic symbols are the Lamb, the Lamb bearing a cross, the Vine, a lamp or candle, to represent the "Light of the World"; and, not so familiar to us now, the fish.

The fish
symbol

The fish, one of the commonest symbols used for Christ, and also for all Christians, has long ceased to call up for us any sacred associations. But we feel its appropriateness when used to represent the followers of Christ, because we recall his words to the apostles that he would make them "fishers of men"; and also his parable of the draw-net, in which the captured fish clearly symbolize the souls brought as spiritual captives into the Church. The rite of baptism again, in early times performed by complete immersion in water, would suggest for Christians the emblem of the fish. But when used to represent Christ its meaning is quite arbitrary, and it seems to have been adopted because the five Greek letters which make the word "Fish" (ΙΧΘΥΣ) are also, when used as an acrostic, the initial letters of Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ—Jesus, Christ, Son of God, Saviour.

The Trinity itself is symbolized in the action of the child Christ when he holds up his hand in blessing, and extends only the thumb and the fore and middle finger.

The
Navicella

For the Christian Church the most familiar and very natural figure is an ark or ship, the *Navicella* (or little ship) as it is called in Italian. In early pictures representing the disciples contending with the storm on the Galilæan lake we must remember that the scene is treated as an everlasting allegory of the faithful souls who are borne along in the ship of salvation across the stormy waters of life.

The
nimbus

No symbol is more familiar than that of the nimbus, aureole, halo, or *glory*, which in early paintings surrounds the head of Christ and the saints. This was already known and adopted by the Greeks and Romans, who represented their gods as crowned like the sun with radiating beams of light. With

them this sign indicated the splendour of power. For many centuries the Christians avoided a symbol connected with heathenism, and the date when (forgetting their prejudices) they first crowned their own divine king with an aureole is not known. But in Christian art this symbol no longer typifies power, but holiness. It suggests the spiritual fact that from beautiful human souls, illuminated within by the Holy Spirit, there does break forth a visible brightness that shines about the face. The early painters, still striving after expression, and only partially able to tell their thoughts through their pictures, could at least indicate through the medium of a nimbus that this or that man or woman was a saint. The earliest form of the nimbus was a solid gold disc, like a plate. In later times it became gradually more delicate, at last a fine gold circle, and then in the period of declining faith and declining art, the nimbus fades altogether from the heads of the saints.

There is one form of *glory* used only for Christ and the Virgin, and sometimes for saints, when, life being over, they are actually mounting towards heaven. This is called the *Mandorla* (almond) from its oval shape. It surrounds the whole figure with a flame of golden rays. The
Mandorla

The crown has no connection with the nimbus, but when used as a symbol it indicates victory. Sometimes it is a wreath of laurel, always recognized as the reward of high achievement, sometimes a circlet of gold. It always typifies the "crown of glory" promised to the Saints of God. It soon became the especial symbol of the glory of martyrdom. As such it is held in the hand by men, but by women martyrs it is worn on the head. Occasionally, when we know the story of the saint wearing a crown, we find that she was actually a queen, and then it is no longer a symbol, but what is called an *attribute*. Men too may wear the crown as an *attribute*, and a royal saint like Louis IX. would be rightly represented with a crown on his head. The crown

Another symbol for victory, a classical symbol, adopted by the Christians, was the palm. Those who bear palms in their The palm

hands are invariably martyrs. This symbol would call up to the mind of the Christian the picture of the triumph in heaven (Rev. xii. 9): "I beheld and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, . . . clothed with white robes and palms in their hands".

The dragon To represent evil, against which the warfare of the saints is directed, the dragon is the almost universal symbol. The serpent represents Satan, the prince of darkness, but the dragon includes the thought of wickedness under all its forms. This again is no exclusively Christian conception. We may remember the Greek myth of Apollo, the god of light, and how with his arrows he slew the Python. In many eastern myths we meet with the same figure of light triumphing over darkness, good triumphing over evil. In Christian art the Archangel Michael is nearly always represented as the dragon-slayer, and in the pictures of S. George, S. Margaret and others, this symbolic dragon, wounded, defeated, or sometimes led captive, represents the triumphant issue of the combat between holiness and sin.

Fruits When flowers or fruits are introduced into sacred pictures they are intended sometimes to serve only a decorative purpose. But the apple is often used as an emblem of the Fall of man; and when in the hand of the Virgin or Child, it suggests the redemption of the world. When the apple or pear is placed in the hands of a saint it represents the "fruits of the Spirit" as described by S. Paul (Gal. v. 22, 23). The half-peeled pomegranate, displaying the seeds within, is an emblem of the future, and suggests the hope of immortality.

Symbolic colour The early Christian artists also gave a symbolic meaning to different colours. Red was intended to typify love; blue, truth; green, hope; and yellow seems to have had various meanings. Sometimes it suggests sunlight and fruitfulness and religious faith. It also symbolizes marriage, and S. Joseph, as the husband of the Virgin, wears a yellow mantle; S. Peter, the married apostle, also wears yellow. Occasionally it suggests evil qualities,—jealousy, inconstancy, deceit—and Judas, the betrayer, is dressed in yellow. White symbolizes purity, the joy of innocence, and faith.

In their mystical visions of heaven the early painters would represent, close round the throne of God, the ruby-coloured seraphs who eternally adore Him; beyond them a circle of cherubs coloured blue. These are represented as less ardent in their power of love, they contemplate with the mind the wonders of divine truth. Beyond them, coloured yellow, are the "Thrones," those spiritual beings whose energy sustains the righteous rule of God. Beyond them again, a circle was imagined of "Dominations, Virtues and Powers". And again, lowest in rank among the heavenly hosts, was the third circle of Principalities, archangels, and angels. The whole conception is symbolic; the circles suggesting eternity, and their number, three times three, giving the mystic number Nine, which to Dante seemed so full of inexhaustible poetry.

There is a very fine example of mediæval symbolism in the west window of Fairford Church, where the first order, consisting of seraphs, cherubs and thrones, is correctly coloured in red, blue and yellow. The whole subject is full of interest, and deserves ampler treatment. It is admirably elucidated in Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*.

CHAPTER III

BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN ART

LOOKING back over the four thousand years during which we have fairly authentic records of the doings of men, we notice that the birth of Christ separates them into two almost equal divisions. Abraham, the founder of the Jewish race, lived in the twentieth century before Christ, our place is in the twentieth century after Christ. The story of Christian art is concerned only with those later centuries to which the impressive name has been given of the "years of the Lord" (*Anni Domini*). Long before his birth Greek art had declined, and almost perished. But the spirit of Greece had greatly influenced the Roman conquerors of the world; they adopted and transformed most of the Greek gods and goddesses, and Roman artists learned how to copy the statues of the Greeks. In every department of public or private decoration, furniture, vases, wall-painting, Greek models were adopted. In all these some memory lingered of the old worship of heathen gods. Mythology and art were inseparably mingled, and by the Christian both were condemned. The new religion looked out beyond the visible to truths apprehended only by the spirit. If these were to be expressed in art, a new art-language must be discovered, almost a new alphabet; and the first rude specimens of Christian art owe their pathetic interest to the fact that in them we see the gropings of a new, spiritualized æsthetic instinct in search of some fitting mode of expression.

There are two classes of early Christian artistic work which we know as belonging either to the Later Roman style, or the Byzantine style.

The Later Roman style originated in the Catacombs. These excavations under the city of Rome, consisting of underground chambers, and long, confused, winding passages, are thought to have been made during some ancient process of quarrying. When the first persecution began under Nero, the Christians fled to these gloomy labyrinths for refuge, and there for several centuries the invincible believers in Christ continued their worship in secret. It is on the walls of the Catacombs that we find pictorial records of that new religious enthusiasm which triumphed over fear; mere symbols at first, the fish, or the cross, or the monogram **P**. Then the desire to depict their Lord under some more human form found expression at last in that of the Good Shepherd, leading or carrying his lambs. For this conception they had the warrant of his own words; and it was under the name of the "Happy Shepherd" that these despised and persecuted fugitives loved best to portray the Master who had led them to secret fountains of inexhaustible joy. They pictured him, not only with his sheep about him, but with a pipe, sometimes a lyre in his hand. They wished to symbolize the new spiritual power which was bringing order into a world of chaos, and subduing all the unruly passions of the heart to the one peaceful dominion of Love. In the story of Orpheus, whose music drew the birds and animals to follow him and stirred trees to break from their roots, and even melted the heart of the stubborn god of Hades, the Christians seemed to find a perfect analogy to the harmonizing influence of the doctrines of Christ. And so, among these hasty sketches on the walls of the Catacombs we find Christ represented as Orpheus with lyre in hand, whilst grouped about him are the spell-bound listening creatures.

Although no so-called portrait of Christ can be accepted as truly resembling him, yet a very definite type of face was at last evolved by these early unknown painters, whether merely ideal or derived from some authentic source we cannot know. It agrees, however, to a remarkable degree with a written account that has come down to us. These are the words of Lentullus: "There appeared in these our days a man of great virtue, named Jesus Christ, who is yet living amongst us, and of the Gentiles

The Later Roman style

First persecution 66 A.D.

Orpheus

Portrait of Christ

is accepted for a prophet of truth, but his own disciples call him the Son of God. He raiseth the dead, and cureth all manner of diseases. A man of stature somewhat tall and comely, with a very reverend countenance, such as the beholders may both love and fear; his hair, the colour of a filbert full ripe, to his ears, whence downwards it is more orient in colour, somewhat curling or waving about his shoulders; in the midst of his head is a seam or partition of his hair after the manner of the Nazarites; his forehead plain and delicate; his face without spot or wrinkle, beautiful with a comely red; his nose and mouth exactly formed; his beard thick, the colour of his hair, not of any great length, but forked; his look innocent; his eyes grey, clear and quick; in reproving, awful; in admonishing, courteous; in speaking, very modest and wise; in proportion of body well shaped. None have ever seen him laugh, but many have seen him weep. A man, for his beauty, surpassing the children of men."

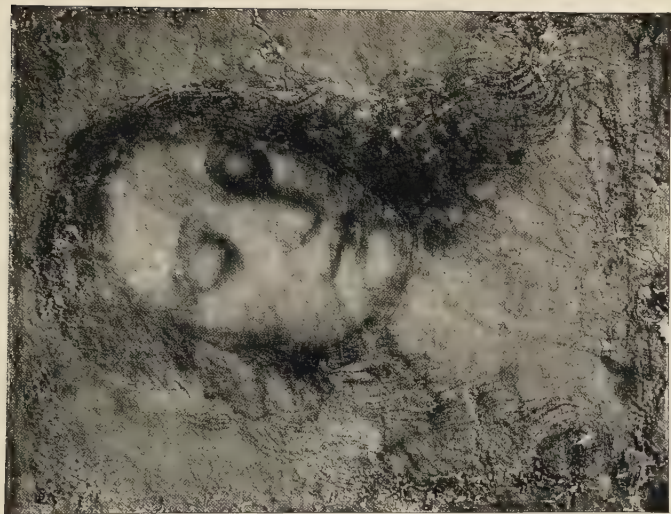
Some are of opinion that the Catacomb pictures represent only the abstract "Spirit of Christianity," rather than the "man Christ Jesus," and that the type of face which afterwards became traditional originated later at Byzantium. But from whichever source, Eastern or Western, this conception of Christ took its origin, we shall find it was accepted and adhered to with little alteration until the period of the Renaissance. Our illustration is from the chamber known as the Catacomb of S. Domitilla. In contrast we show Leonardo's *Head of Christ* (see p. 74).

First
Christian
Emperor
Edict of
Milan
313 A.D.

When Constantine the Great adopted the Christian faith, he introduced it into the Roman Empire, and abolished by edict the worship of the heathen gods. At once the whole position of the Christian Church was altered. Christianity became the fashion; the fervour of faith, which had animated early Christian artistic work, seems now gradually to have declined. Not that Christian art perished, but it changed. In Rome, Milan, Ravenna, Constantinople, churches were now raised to the Christians' God. The old heathen temples were not suited by their construction for the new worship, but certain



HEAD OF CHRIST
From the Catacombs of S. Domitilla, Rome



HEAD OF CHRIST
 ATTRIBUTED TO LEONARDO DA VINCI
Brescia, Milan

existing buildings called basilicas, chiefly used for courts of justice, were often converted into churches. The main features of a basilica were its oblong shape; the division of the floor-space, by parallel rows of pillars into a nave and two aisles; and at the end facing the entrance, a raised recess covered in by an apse. In Italy this pattern was usually adopted for all new churches of the early Christian period. One curious result was that two companion buildings were soon erected beside it; the tall bell-tower known as the *campanile*, and the baptistery, usually a circular building which contained the large font required in these early times for baptism by immersion. To adorn these Christian basilicas new forms of art-decoration were introduced.

This kind of work had been practised for many centuries. It consisted in binding together with cement, small coloured cubes of stone or terra-cotta, so as to form a patterned, smooth surface, which was used chiefly for pavements. During the reigns of the early Roman emperors in the first century A.D. the art of making mosaics attained a high degree of perfection. Not only patterns were produced in it, but natural objects and human figures. Necessarily these were rather stiffly portrayed, but the general outline was clear, and the various colours of the tiny cubes enabled the artist to copy nature pretty closely. Sometimes cubes of glass were used, and these, when gilt, sparkled brilliantly, and, when coloured, shone with the transparency of jewels.

At what date mosaics were first used for decorating walls and ceilings does not seem to be positively known. But it is certain that the earliest known mosaics representing Christian subjects are the work of the fourth century. Very few specimens of these now remain, but much original work of the fifth century may still be seen in very old churches in Rome and Ravenna. The subjects chosen by the now triumphant and powerful Christian Church were those which proclaimed the majesty of Christ as King. Very frequently on the wall-space behind the altar, he is represented far beyond life-size, either standing, or sitting on a throne. Beside him, in later work,

the Virgin appears, and sometimes she usurps his place. Around the central figure are grouped the twelve apostles. Below very often are sacred emblems chosen from the book of the Revelation: the Lamb, the mysterious sealed book, the candlestick, and other symbols which suggest the second advent of Christ in glory. We should remember that the work belonging to the Later Roman style preserves some of the feeling for beauty which had been caught by the Romans from the Greeks. But gradually this element of beauty is lost, and the stiff angular figures of the mosaics of the sixth and following centuries, whether found in Italy or in Greece, are classed as belonging to the Byzantine style.

The
Byzantine
style

The
Church of
S. Sophia

When Constantine became a Christian, he shifted the capital of the empire from Rome to Byzantium on the Bosphorus. Very soon this town had grown into a magnificent imperial city, and it received the new name of Constantinople, or the "city of Constantine". Here he built one of the most famous churches of the world, and dedicated it to "Hagia Sophia," the Greek for "Divine Wisdom". This has been corrupted to "Saint Sophia," by which name it has been known ever since. The design of this splendid church was quite different from that of a basilica. It consisted of four transepts, placed opposite and at right angles to each other, thus forming a Greek cross. Over the central space, on to which the four arms opened, was raised a high dome. Later, when this type was more developed, a small dome was also placed over each of the four transepts. All the churches of the Eastern Empire were built in this shape, which is known as Byzantine; and in 532 Justinian, the famous Emperor of the East, re-built S. Sophia from its foundations, and lined its walls with some of the finest mosaics of the period. When the Turks conquered Constantinople in 1453 they converted this Christian church into a Mohammedan mosque, and such it remains to the present day.

532 A.D.,
rebuilding
of S. Sophia

1453

But from the time of Justinian onward the mosaics and paintings of the Eastern Empire are regarded as belonging to the Byzantine style, and they may still be seen on the walls of those Christian buildings which the Turks have preserved.

We must remember that Justinian, and the succeeding Emperors of the East, continued to claim dominion in the West; and, though at length the Ostrogoths and Lombards became masters of Northern and Central Italy, the coast towns remained faithful to the authority of the emperors. The changes in art which originated in the Eastern Empire were therefore communicated to Italy, and we have specimens of Byzantine art in both countries.

Its characteristics are an extreme stiffness of form, a monotonous repetition of the same unnatural attitudes in all the figures represented, and a large use of gold and brilliant colours to compensate for the absence of correct drawing. Almost invariably the background is in gold. Both faces and figures are little better than rude caricatures. This degraded condition of art was without doubt partly due to the influence of the Church. It assumed control over the artists employed to decorate Christian churches, and repressed that exercise of free choice of subject and treatment which is a necessity to those who are striving after artistic expression. The Church went so far as not only to dictate the subjects, but the precise manner in which they were to be represented. Of this we have a proof in some old documents discovered in a Greek Convent on Mount Athos. One is a manual on the art of painting, which first gives directions for preparing and grinding the colours, and the way in which they are to be applied. Then it proceeds to give rules for the grouping of every figure in any given sacred subject; fixing the type for each, the attitude, colour of dress, even the arbitrary lines or shadows used to express youth or age, or the different mental qualities of the persons represented. This is quite in accordance with words used at one of the great Church Councils: "It is not the invention of the painter which creates the picture, but an inviolable law, a tradition of the Catholic Church. It is not the painters, but the holy fathers who have to invent and to dictate. To them manifestly belongs the composition, to the painter only the execution." Thus arose one traditional type for the *portrait* of Christ and of the Virgin, and for the

Characteristics of
Byzantine
style

Types
fixed by
Christian
tradition

grouped figures of Mother and Child; for the Nativity, Baptism, Crucifixion, and other scenes from the life of the Lord.

Though art receives its purest inspiration from religion, we are not surprised to find that it was stifled by this kind of domineering patronage. It required no imaginative power to produce copies of helplessly feeble and inert figures which soon became conventional; and for some six centuries men seem to have lost altogether the power of seeing beauty and representing it.

CHAPTER IV

LEGENDS OF THE VIRGIN MARY

IF we would understand the power and charm of mediæval pictorial art, we must try, by an act of imaginative sympathy, to enter into the beliefs of the period.

To the painters of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and early fifteenth centuries the Virgin mother was a celestial being, about whom they cherished devout and ardent thoughts, and to whom they addressed their most passionate prayers. We cannot trace, as an historian would do, the origin of this worship of the mother of Christ, but we know that it was of gradual growth; and that it exercised a very humanizing influence on the races of Europe as they worked their way upwards from barbarism. This honour paid to the Virgin was of theological value because it served to emphasize an important doctrine, that of the complete union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. For early heresies more often questioned the humanity of Christ than his divinity. So every picture in which Mother and Son appear together may be regarded as enshrining in symbolic form this doctrine of the perfect humanity of Christ.

Socially the influence of the cult of the Virgin was of in-calculable value. It fixed the attention of undisciplined, combative men on the feminine virtues, such as meekness, purity, tenderness, the exercise of mercy to the weak. True, all these virtues are included in the perfect manhood of Christ as revealed in the gospels. But the Church understood the unconscious craving of battle-weary men for a vision of mother-

hood, of the woman element in human nature exalted to its highest perfection. And so the "lowly hand-maiden" of the Magnificat was lifted step by step (in obedience to ecclesiastical teaching) up to the position of "Mother of God," "Queen of Heaven," and the central object of devotion throughout Europe. Chivalry bestowed on her the name of "Our Lady," churches were raised to her honour, and brotherhoods of monks and friars enrolled themselves in the service of the Virgin queen. The poets sang of her purity and compassion; and Dante in particular, assigning her in his *Paradiso* the place of honour in the "Mystic Rose" and naming her the Queen of Heaven, inspired men to represent her more worthily in art.

Names of
the Virgin

She is known under many names, each representing some one aspect of her manifold benignity. These are a few: Our Lady of Succour, Our Lady of Mercy, Our Lady of Consolation, Our Lady of Peace. She is known as the Mater Dolorosa (the mourning mother) when contemplating the sacrifice of the cross, and sharing the sufferings of the Redeemer of the world. She is known as *Madonna* (my lady) in every Christian land.

Devotional
pictures

The early *portraits*, as they may be called, of the Virgin, during the Byzantine period of art, are mere symbols intended to fix the mind and direct the course of meditation.

The later pictures fall into two distinct classes: those intended for altar-pieces would be treated devotionally, those meant for instruction, in the historical manner. A "devotional" picture is intended to fix the mind on some great truth of which the picture is only a symbol. As mentioned above the group of Mother and Child represents the Incarnation. This subject is presented as a *mystery*, and the aim of the painter is to lead us out beyond the visible figures on the panel or canvas to an unseen object of religious adoration. The harmony of colours, the quiet, almost statuesque attitude of the figures, the flowers, fruits, birds, and other graceful accessories are all meant to draw the thoughts heavenward. In a devotional picture we may see S. John the Baptist, as a grown man, standing beside the infant Christ, and we may also see the saints

and martyrs who lived centuries later. This is no anachronism ; they too with ourselves are adoring the same eternal mystery, which cannot be restricted within the limits of space and time.

But in a sacred subject treated historically, the time limits must be correctly observed. Here we shall see the child-Christ and the child S. John of the same age, and there would be some attempt to give a realistic setting to the scene. Not that we should ever have an actually Eastern representation of these Bible events—such pedantic literalism seems never to have suggested itself to early Christian painters,—but we should have the story dramatically rendered under circumstances that could be imagined as probable in the painter's own country.

In devotional pictures of the Virgin she is occasionally alone. When represented as weeping over the dead body of Christ the picture is called a *Pietà*.

Two very favourite subjects in which she appears apart from the Child, though not unaccompanied, are the *Assumption* and the *Coronation*. In the former she is seen ascending on the clouds, with angels floating around her in the air. Below we generally see the tomb, a heavy sarcophagus, whose stone lid has been forced open by the tall Madonna lilies that have miraculously grown inside. (No. 1126 in the National Gallery is a good example.) And in the lower part of the picture it is usual to place the twelve apostles gazing upward at the ascending form.

In the *Coronation* we see her in heaven where Christ himself puts a royal crown upon her head. Sometimes, in an Assumption, we see in the upper part of the tall picture the scene of the Coronation too, so that the whole represents a continuous episode;—the passing from the grave up through the clouds to the throne prepared for her in heaven.

But when the Coronation alone is represented, with kneeling figures of saints of all ages in the foreground, then we are before a picture which embodies a doctrine. This is no longer a scene or an action, but a great religious mystery. Here the Virgin typifies the redeemed and glorified Church. She has now

become the mystical Bride of the Lamb, and the crown placed on her head foretells her final spiritual victory over the world :—

“ When the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.”

In all renderings of the Coronation, whether by Italian, Flemish, Spanish or German artists, the dress of the Virgin is magnificent, embroidered in colours, brilliant with jewels, loaded, in the early pictures, with gold.

The
enthroned
Madonna

This is the most usual representation of the Mother and Child as an object of devout contemplation. The throne may be simply a chair raised on a dais, or it may be some elaborately decorated seat overhung by a canopy. It is usual in such a picture to add in the foreground the figures of saints, these varying according to the town, church or convent for which the picture was painted. S. John the Baptist, as patron saint, will be seen in Florence; S. Mark in Venice; S. Ursula in Cologne.

Votive
Madonnas

In votive pictures, commissioned by some patron of art to testify gratitude to the Virgin for an answer to prayer, we shall find the saints supposed to be personally interested in the donor's family. Cosmo and Damian, for instance, the doctor-saints, the “holy money-despisers,” appear often in pictures painted for the great House of Medici. Sometimes, too, in the foreground of a votive picture are represented the kneeling figures of the donor and his family.

The
domestic
Holy
Family

The natural, human relation of mother to child is itself, apart from all religious associations, one of the most beautiful themes that life affords. Sir Joshua Reynolds has often given us a rendering of this *mystery* which rivals in simplicity of sentiment the work of the best mediæval artists.

When, in addition to the natural love of mother and child, shown in smile or caress, we have the solemnity of treatment which typifies the wonder of the Incarnation, the picture still is considered to be devotional. But when the little S. John is introduced as a playmate, and S. Joseph looks on with paternal eyes, we have what may be called a *domestic* Holy Family.

This particular form of sacred picture was not introduced until the late fifteenth century, and at once became popular.

Unfortunately, though treated with perfect reverence by the majority of painters, and by Raphael in particular with a delicate grace, this more familiar rendering of a sacred subject led in time to abuses. Many of the realistic painters who very rightly drew from a model for the subordinate figures, now would copy some light woman of the town in their studies for the head of the Virgin, and the whole spiritual potency of the subject was thus lost.

When the life of the Virgin is dealt with as an historical subject, the treatment is always more dramatic than in a devotional picture. Now the artist is called on to paint a story, and with freer scope for individual invention he often supplies us with new and naïve renderings of some well-known episode.

Joachim and his wife Anna, the parents of the Virgin, could trace their descent from the royal house of David, but no child had blessed their union. Late in life, in obedience to a vision, they separated for a time, Joachim spending some months in solitary exile in the wilderness. Reunited at the *Golden Gate* of the Temple (a favourite scene in early pictures) the aged couple received the promise of a child.

This child, the Blessed Mary, was dedicated to God, and when taken at three years old to the Temple, she ran of her own accord up the long flight of steps to the high priest who was waiting to receive her. She was brought up in the precincts of the Temple, and in due time a husband was sought for her of the high priest. Widowers alone were invited to sue for her hand; each was to bring a rod and lay it on the altar, when by some clear sign the chosen husband would be revealed. From the rod of Joseph the carpenter there escaped a pure white dove, which after settling on his head, soared up to heaven.

Another tradition relates that the rods of the suitors were laid over-night before the altar in the Temple, and in the morning it was found that the rod of Joseph had broken forth into blossom. He was the chosen husband; and the other suitors,

Historical
treatment
of the life of
the Virgin

Legend of
Joachim
and Anna

angry and disappointed, some of them breaking their rods in despair, withdrew from the scene.

Pictorial
treatment
of the
legends

When these stories are treated of in art, we often find the whole series of events presented in consecutive order. They were often painted in fresco on the walls of churches, and served, like a pictorial Bible, for the instruction of the people. One of the most famous series is that painted by Giotto in the Arena Chapel at Padua (p. 47).

Presenta-
tion of the
Virgin

The Presentation in the Temple, which follows the earlier scenes of Joachim and Anna, and the Meeting at the Golden Gate, is a very favourite subject, and has been treated both in fresco and oil by nearly every painter ranging from Giotto to Titian. Our illustration is by Vittore Carpaccio, the Venetian (p. 103). He follows the old rules as to composition, but introduces in the foreground a most attractive little modern child, whose presence rather distracts our attention from the sacred legend. The picture is in the Brera Gallery at Milan.

Lo
Sposalizio

The scene of the Marriage (in Italian *Lo Sposalizio*) is again a very great favourite with artists. It is generally represented as taking place in the open air, the Temple rising in the background. The white-haired high priest in his magnificent robes stands in the centre of the picture, and unites the hands of Mary and Joseph, while beyond Mary are her maidens, and grouped near Joseph are the disappointed suitors. In Raphael's famous *Sposalizio* in the Brera Gallery at Milan there is one young suitor (not quite the regulation widower in appearance) whose life-like attitude cannot easily be forgotten. Clad in red, he bends and snaps his rod across his knee in such a manner as to betray the bitterness of his disappointment. The whole scene, rich in colour, delicate in outline, breathing the true spirit of reticent romance, has been likened by Kugler to a lyric poem. Our illustration shows this celebrated early Raphael.

There are two very small, quaint pictures on this subject in Room II. of the National Gallery, Nos. 1109 and 1317. Joseph's blossoming rod may be seen in No. 625 by Bonvicino, and in No. 13 by Murillo.



THE MARRIAGE OF THE VIRGIN

RAPHAEL
Brera, Milan



THE PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN

CARPACCIO
Brera, Milan

Of the scriptural scenes in the life of the Virgin perhaps the favourite ones are the Annunciation, the Nativity of Christ, and the Visit of the Magi. The Annunciation is invariably treated in a devotional manner, and so simple is the whole conception that more artists have achieved excellence in this subject than almost any other. We reproduce (p. 27) a singularly beautiful example from a church in Fano. The scene, as usual, is represented in a *loggia* or open corridor, and here we have the spacious background to be expected from Perugino. As in all other *Annunciations* the angel Gabriel holds the symbolic lily. But the representation above of God the Father in a mandorla of cherub-heads is quite original. Peace and harmony and a sense of mystery should always pervade the scene.

The Nativity of Christ is another subject of inexhaustible interest to mediæval painters. Certain conventions must be observed, but there is much scope for the exercise of religious fancy in the arrangement and expressions of the three principal figures. If regarded as an historical event, the presence of the ox and the ass is indispensable; and to lovers of animals the expression of pious astonishment often depicted on their faces as they discover the Babe in the Manger is a source of delightful dramatic interest.

When treated as a mystery the Child often lies on the ground, a centre of light, while mother and father kneel in adoration. Sometimes angels are present, and sometimes, as in other devotional subjects, there are saints introduced as spectators. A very famous picture of the Nativity is Correggio's *La Notte* (the Night) in the Dresden gallery. He presents the scene as occurring during the real deep darkness of a northern night. But from the new-born wonderful Child there shines forth a glory which fills the whole picture with unearthly light (p. 128).

As a sacred allegory there is perhaps no better example than Botticelli's *Nativity* in our own gallery (No. 1034). In the centre of a rough shed open in front, lies the Child, his finger on his lip, which symbolizes the words "I am the Word" or "I am the Bread of Life". Mary kneels in adoration; Joseph, a

crouching figure to the left, seems paralysed by deep emotion. On the right of the shed three angels present three shepherds, and symmetrically placed on the opposite side of the shed are the three Magi from the East. In the foreground three angels, robed in the celestial colours of white, green, and red (for faith, hope, and love), embrace three mortals, while grotesque demons fly to hide themselves in the crevices of the rocks. On the roof of the shed three angels (in white, green, and red) are bending over one book, and reading from it a song of praise. At the top of the picture, in a golden haze, beyond the blue of our seen heavens, there are twelve angels engaged in a joyous and mystic dance. They carry an olive branch in one hand, and from the other hangs a crown. Their colours are white, green, and red. Behind the shed the lower scene is closed in by a belt of very dark trees.

It is not hard to interpret the allegory. We see, as in a magic crystal, that one moment of crisis from which sprang the rejuvenescence of a world. The gloom of that heathen world is shown in the background of dark, almost malignant-looking forest trees; but the Child born in the lowly stable with father and mother beside him, will restore the lost harmonies of family life. He will attract to his cradle both peasant and scholar, and heal the feud which parts class from class. At his coming the worst vices of heathendom, like the loathly creatures in the picture, will flee. Men and angels will embrace, for man will remember that he too is of heavenly lineage. Peace will return to the earth and gladness; we learn this from the olive branches borne by the angels, from the colours of love and hope and purity in which they are arrayed, and from their song and their jubilant dance. This picture is a true Christmas Carol.

The
Adoration
of the Magi

The Adoration of the Magi, as known to art, is accompanied by many details for which there is no warrant in the gospel narrative. But the story is in its nature picturesque, and legend upon legend grew up around it as the centuries advanced. It was very soon positively known that the Wise Men were kings, for in those days, the writer of an early legend naïvely informs



THE ANNUNCIATION

PERUGINO

Church of St. Maria Nuova Fano, (See p. 25,



THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

ALBERT DÜRER

Off. B. F. 1511

us, "it was not unusual for kings to be also wise". These kings were three in number, and before very long they were familiarly known by name, and their ages were fixed. Caspar was old, with a long white beard; Melchior was middle aged; Balthasar was young. Moreover, despite ignorance as to the countries from which they came, there was a general agreement as to the complexion of Balthasar, who should appear in pictures as a negro. From this grew their mystical interpretation as Europe, Asia and Africa, and the beautiful thought suggested in the kneeling bareheaded figure of the first, the lifting of his crown by the second, and the detached air of insensibility in the third. As real kings many stories of them were current, and it was positively asserted that their bones—discovered long after death by the Empress Helena—were transported to Constantinople. From thence, centuries later again, they were removed to Milan, and in the twelfth century they found their way to Cologne where they lie gorgeously enshrined in the cathedral. They are known now as the "Three Kings of Cologne". There are so many pictures on this subject in every gallery in Europe that it is hard to single out any one in particular for description. In contrast to our Italian *Annunciation* we give a German *Adoration*, painted in 1504 by Albert Dürer. It now hangs in the Uffizi gallery at Florence and ranks among its treasures. The standing king with long hair (Melchior) is said to be a portrait of Dürer himself; in the Virgin—strong, capable, matronly—we have a characteristic and beautiful presentment of the ideal German mother.

There is an interesting *Adoration* by Vincenzo Foppa of Milan in the National Gallery (No. 729) and several by Tuscan artists.

Lastly, we should not omit the scene of the Virgin's death. This, according to legend, was foretold by an angel; and to distinguish this announcement of death from the true *Annunciation* the angel now bears a palm instead of a lily. More frequent than the announcement of it is the scene of the death itself, at which the twelve apostles are always present grouped around the bed. Death of
the Virgin

Our illustration (see p. 100) from a picture by Mantegna in the Prado Gallery, Madrid, is considered to be one of the finest on the subject. The beautiful lake stretching far away towards the edge of heaven suggests the coming emancipation of a "peace-parted" soul. It is in reality the Lake of Mantua, seen often by the painter, here immortalized and transfigured in a devotional picture. We see the angel with the palm to the left: S. Peter has the sacred vessels in his hand, S. John bends over the body of his Lord's Mother. The quiet attitude of the other apostles, the tapers, the purity of every line, and the harmonious colouring combine to produce a very solemn impression; but the solemnity is blended with a sense of exceeding peace.

CHAPTER V

SOME LEGENDS OF THE SAINTS

SOME slight knowledge of the legends of the saints is the almost necessary key to the understanding of mediæval pictures. In a few quaint old specimens the artist has obligingly labelled his saints, by writing in the name very small upon the halo or the robe. But we cannot always expect this, nor can we accept the practice as legitimate art. The only alternative is a recognized code of symbols, or an arbitrarily fixed and separate attribute for every saint. This is what really has been done, and those who have thoroughly mastered their subject can recognize every saint at first sight. We can only speak of a few of the best known.

The three archangels, Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, should first be named. Gabriel nearly always carries the lily, and we know him well in pictures of the Annunciation. Michael, the angel of judgment, is the captain of the hosts of heaven, and he is represented in armour, with a sword girt round his waist. He stands frequently with his foot on a dragon, the symbol of evil. Sometimes he holds the balances in which are weighed the good and evil deeds of departed souls. Sometimes the souls themselves, little naked human figures, are placed in the scales to be weighed.

Of the third archangel, Raphael, we read in the apocryphal book of Tobit. He is especially the guardian of the human race, and in many ways resembles the Greek conception of Hermes as the friend of travellers, and the protector of the home. Raphael is represented in pilgrim garb with a staff in

Three
Archangels

S. Raphael

his hand, and a wallet or perhaps a bottle of water slung to his waist. He is gentle, sympathetic, concerned in human affairs, and can never be confounded with the stately and formidable S. Michael. He appears chiefly in scenes from the Book of Tobit, treated in the historical manner. We then see him in disguise (without wings) acting as the friendly guide of young Tobias who carries a fish in his hand. But if the fish is unnaturally small, and Raphael wears his wings, then the picture becomes a sacred allegory. The fish, we remember, is the symbol of the Christian, and S. Raphael, the guardian angel, is seen guiding a Christian soul through the difficulties of this earthly life.

The four
Evangelists

The Evangelists too we should be able at once to recognize. Their four attributes are—the cherub's head for S. Matthew, the lion for S. Mark, the ox for S. Luke, and the eagle for S. John. Sometimes S. John holds a chalice, from which rises the head of a snake. This is thought to symbolize the "cup" of which he and his brother asked to drink. S. John should always be young in appearance, and have long, fair, curling hair, and his dress should be red, with a green or blue tunic. S. Peter is old, with a bald head surrounded by a fringe of white hair, and his dress is yellow, as we know that he was married (see p. 10).

Some of the best known legendary saints are S. George, S. Nicholas, S. Sebastian; and in Florence in particular the two doctor-saints, Cosmo and Damian.

S. George
303 A.D.,
April 23

S. George, the patron saint of England, Germany, Russia and Venice, was not born in any of those places. He was a native of Cappadocia and lived in the days of the Emperor Diocletian. He was an officer in the Roman army and a Christian. Travelling once to join his legion he rode through the land of Libya, then devastated by a horrible dragon who claimed daily two children to satisfy his hunger. At last on the daughter of the king fell the fatal lot, and she set forth alone on her road to death. Then George, the gallant soldier, passing that way, resolved to rescue her, and boldly attacking the dragon he overcame him. Then all in that city feared the

God of S. George, and "the King and people believed and were baptized, twenty thousand in one day,"—so affirms the ancient Chronicle. A few years later, in consequence of Diocletian's edict against the Christians, S. George suffered death as a martyr.

It was during the Third Crusade that Richard Cœur de Lion first placed an English army under the protection of the warrior-saint, and thus linked us as a nation to S. George. In 1222 his feast (April 23) became by royal edict a public holiday throughout the country; and when Edward III. in 1344 instituted the Order of the Garter, S. George's position as patron saint of England was finally confirmed.

S. Nicholas is a contrast to S. George, and is essentially the saint of the poor. A bishop by office he came to be universally honoured as a glorified saint and benefactor. He is the guardian of little children, of school boys, and especially of orphans. He is the protector of the labourer and the merchant, and of all who travel "by land or by water".

Nicholas after many years of faithful work as a priest was chosen to be Bishop of Myra, and in this high station was distinguished for piety, self-abnegation, and boundless charity to the poor. After death his tomb became an object of pilgrimage, and in 1084 some merchants of Bari, a sea-coast town in Italy, determined to become possessed of his valuable wonder-working body. They attacked Myra, secured the body of the saint, and sailed away with it to Bari, where a magnificent church was erected over a second tomb. The Venetians tell a similar tale, and affirm that the true S. Nicholas lies with them. But Christendom sides with the men of Bari, and this saint is known by the two titles of S. Nicholas of Myra and S. Nicholas of Bari.

In art S. Nicholas is represented, as a rule, in pontifical robes with the crozier in his hand. At his feet, and sometimes in his hand, are three balls. Some critics give to these the symbolic meaning of the Trinity; but most connect them with a story of three purses given to a destitute nobleman for his daughters. As the protector of sea-faring men we find churches dedicated

S. George
becomes
the patron
saint of
England,
1222

S. Nicholas
336 A.D.,
Dec. 9

Becomes
Bishop of
Myra

Trans-
ference of
the body
to Bari

to S. Nicholas in a large number of European sea-port towns, even in England there are about 376. As one of the great patron saints he is frequently introduced into devotional pictures of the Madonna. There is no finer presentment of him than Raphael's in the *Ansdei Madonna* (No. 1171 in our Gallery). The clear-cut intellectual face is refined by the strict discipline of unremitting self-denial. But the gentleness of his expression shows that it was a self-denial borne for the sake of others, and not to gratify any form of spiritual pride. In Germany S. Nicholas, known as Santa Claus, is beloved by all the children as the bringer of their Christmas gifts.

S. Sebastian, 288,
Jan. 20

The story of S. Sebastian has a sounder historic foundation than either of the two preceding. He was a native of Narbonne in Gaul, an officer in the praetorian guard, and secretly a Christian. During the persecutions of Diocletian he fell under the suspicions of the Emperor, openly avowed his faith, and was condemned to death. The order was given that he should be bound to a stake and shot, and that the troops should know his only fault was his love to Christ. Pierced with many arrows (none however striking a vital spot) he was left for dead; but the friends who carried away his body found that life was not extinct, and they tended his wounds, and he recovered. Instead of fleeing as his friends advised, he boldly pleaded with the Emperor the cause of his fellow-Christians: a vain effort which resulted only in his own death.

Protector
from the
plague

It was probably the arrows, a frequent symbol for the pestilence (Ps. xci. 5), which led to the veneration of S. Sebastian as a protector from the plague. He was thought to have power to avert that fearful scourge, and in nearly all the cities of Europe there are churches dedicated to him in thanksgiving for deliverance from the plague.

Pictures
of S.
Sebastian

In art he is occasionally represented as spreading out his robe to protect those who are praying to him from the destructive arrows that are falling among them. But we know S. Sebastian better as the martyr bound half-naked to the stake, and transfixed with arrows (see p. 190). Even thus we have no mere record of an historical event, we must bear ever in mind the

mythical conception of his power to save. He remains young, beautiful, full of life, and the dreaded arrows cannot harm him; therefore it was believed that his prayers to heaven could render his votaries alike invulnerable. No saint is more popular in Italy, and no subject has been more frequently treated in the art of all countries.

There is an interesting draped S. Sebastian (No. 724) in our Gallery where we see him as the soldier and courtier; his dress is gorgeously brilliant, and only by the arrow in his right hand do we recognize the martyr. On the opposite wall (No. 807) he appears again, transfixed with arrows. Both pictures are by Crivelli.

Among women-saints none is more famous than S. Catherine of Alexandria, virgin and martyr. She was daughter and heiress to a King of Egypt, and remarkable both for beauty and high intellectual gifts. Secretly she learned to know Christ, and, having dreamed that he put on her finger a ring of betrothal, she vowed to wed none other. On her father's death she became queen, but rejected the many suitors who asked for her hand. Among these was Maximus, a cruel Roman governor, who in his anger denounced her as a Christian. He ordered that four revolving wheels should be made, studded with sharp points, and that Catherine should be torn in pieces in the midst of them. But an angel from heaven broke them and delivered her. At last, by the hand of an executioner, her head was severed from her body. The angels bore her after death to the summit of Mount Sinai, where her tomb may be seen to this day in the monastery which is known by her name (p. 124).

The pictures of S. Catherine as a patron saint, or historically depicted as a martyr, are extremely numerous. She may be known by the accompanying wheel. Occasionally, when this is absent, the crown on her head and the palm of martyrdom in her hand enable us to recognize her. We have a *portrait* picture of her by Raphael in our Gallery (No. 168). She appears frequently, grouped with other saints, in pictures of the Holy Family.

The
Marriage
of S.
Catherine

The most important and interesting subject connected with her story is the Marriage of S. Catherine. This is essentially a spiritual allegory, and is treated by early painters with a reverent and delicate restraint. It represents the *Mystery* of the union of the soul with Christ, an experience of the religious life which art alone can express.

Picture by
Ambrogio
Borgo-
gnone

There is probably nowhere a more beautiful example of this subject, treated in the true spirit of mysticism, than the picture by Borgognone in our Gallery (No. 298), which is here reproduced. Simplicity and gravity are the chief characteristics in the face of the young mother. The Child wears a little coat of yellow, the symbolic colour for marriage. His face too is grave, and the flashes of gold breaking from his curly hair give an air of majesty to the childish figure. S. Catherine to the left is dressed in red (the colour of love) and on her raised hand the Child is gently pressing a ring. He holds out a second ring towards S. Catherine of Siena, the Dominican nun, whose story belongs to history rather than legend. This picture suggests more than can be read by the eye. Here are two "brides" of the "King of Glory". The one in her dismal black robes may be regarded as a symbol of the soul which unites itself to Christ through abnegation. Here is the absence of earthly desire rather than the presence of a longing for divine satisfaction. But Catherine of Alexandria, in her flame-coloured robe, is the symbol of those other and more eager souls, who give themselves with gladness to the one whom they recognize as the "altogether lovely" (see p. 122).

Picture by
Gheeraert
David

A second very interesting *Marriage of S. Catherine* in our Gallery is by Gheeraert David (No. 1432). It is painted with the exquisite finish for which the master is noted. It is full of the same repose, solemnity, and sense of mystery which we have observed in Borgognone's picture. And here there is the additional symbolism of growing flowers and a wall behind the group; suggesting the "garden enclosed" of the Canticles (chapter iv. 12). Beyond again is a vineyard where an angel is gathering grapes. S. Barbara and S. Mary Magdalene are seated to the right, and in the foreground kneels the donor,—



a very noble-looking priest in the surplice and cassock of his office (see p. 147).

To realize the peculiar spiritual charm which pervades these beautiful pictures, we should contrast them with others painted at a later period when the love of line and colour and chiaroscuro, for their own delightful sake, had clouded the more delicate inward perception of ideal beauty.

So we give also the famous *Marriage of S. Catherine* by Correggio in the Louvre (No. 1117). It is attractive enough when regarded as the presentment of a pretty domestic scene. The Child is pushing the ring on to the finger of S. Catherine with the anxious, almost officious look of an every-day human baby engaged in an act which he regards as important. S. Catherine has the slightly amused look of the mature person who finds this important act both comic and charming. The mother's smile shows the maternal gratification naturally aroused by such an incident. An effeminately handsome S. Sebastian "assists," as the French would say, at the precocious performance. All very natural, pretty, and true to life. But the catalogue describes this as a *Mystic* marriage. It is obvious that Correggio has no mystic purpose in its composition (see p. 127).

Picture by
Correggio

Again it is very interesting to notice Titian's treatment of S. Catherine in No. 635 in the National Gallery. True, this is only an ordinary *domestic* Holy Family, and a peculiarly lovely picture it is. But the S. Catherine bending to kiss the Child as an elder sister would fondle her baby brother, is quite false to the conception of her character and her relation to Christ. Titian, the great colourist, feels that her soft green frock gives the right central note of colour to his foreground, and our artistic sense is entranced. Before a picture like this it is pedantic to insist on strict adherence to the legend. But afterwards, when reflection is at work, we may recall some of the introductory remarks about *theme* and *form*; and realize that the earlier painters with their more serious and poetic rendering of their theme may exert a charm quite as potent as that which is achieved by the greater masters of form, such as Correggio and Titian.

S. Cath-
erine by
Titian

S. Barbara A few words only about S. Barbara. She too lived in Egypt, and, on account of her extraordinary beauty, her father confined her in a tower to guard her from undesirable suitors. Solitude led her to question the creeds of heathenism, and she secretly communicated by letter with a Christian bishop who taught her the true faith. Her father, on learning of her conversion, put her to death with his own hand. S. Barbara was regarded as the patron saint of armourers and gun-smiths, of fire-arms and fortifications. She protected her votaries from injury in battle, and from thunder and lightning and sudden death. She was the saint of the active life, the mediæval life of almost constant warfare. S. Catherine, on the other hand, who is her frequent companion in pictorial groups of saints, was the patron of the contemplative life led by the scholar and the monk.

**S. Barbara
in art** S. Barbara may be known by her tower, and as protectress against sudden death she alone of all female saints bears the sacramental cup. For it was believed that her votaries would never die neglected by the Church.

For the legends of S. Ursula with her eleven thousand virgins, of S. Cecilia, S. Margaret, S. Agatha, and countless other martyrs and saints, we must refer the reader to Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*, or to later books on the same subject.

CHAPTER VI

THE AWAKENING OF ART IN ITALY

AFTER the fall of the Roman Empire in the West (in 476 A.D.) Europe was gradually brought under the dominion of those warrior tribes of the Germanic stock to whom the Romans gave the general name of "barbarians". Civilization was for a time arrested, and then some six centuries later, out of the confusion of the Dark Ages, there arose a new Europe. North of the Alps, to speak in general terms, the Germanic element had triumphed over Roman traditions; south of the Alps there was a greater fusion of the two races, which led to an earlier revival of civilization. The separation between the Greek Church and the Latin Church (in 727), and the re-establishment of a Western Empire by Karl the Great (800),
Separation between East and West, 727 and 800 finally withdrew the whole of Italy from Byzantine influence. Then, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries followed the long struggle for supremacy between the Popes and Emperors, in which the Popes prevailed. The triumph of the Roman Church restored to Italy some of its old sense of national importance; and, encouraged by the Popes, there arose those many free cities in which was born and fostered a new form of patriotic enthusiasm. The devotion, for instance, of a Florentine to his city amounted to a passion; and the same feeling which sent him eagerly into the battlefield to fight in her defence, aroused too the desire to make beautiful the city he so deeply loved. It was in the free cities of Italy that art awoke from her long sleep, and began to fill the world again with beautiful buildings, statues, and pictures, which differ in many essential points from the art-products of classic times.

Contrast
between
Greek and
early
Christian
art

Greek art had aimed at representing the perfection of human beauty, and achieved its aim. A perfectly developed, graceful body, and faultlessly correct features, these the Greek sculptors have given to the world as models which cannot, of their kind, be surpassed. But the Christian painters had a different aim. They wished to portray the soul, to express the conflict between soul and body, and to suggest the illimitable heights of moral beauty to which the human soul may attain.

Technical
defects in
early
pictures

In order to do this they disregarded physical beauty—the early Christian painters seem almost to have feared it—and directed all their efforts towards giving spiritual expression to very ordinary and even plain faces. Their aim, as Browning puts it, was “to bring the invisible full into play”. Often, as we might expect (for their task was difficult), these efforts resulted in failure. But when Christian art does succeed, it gives us glimpses of devout ardour, of manly resolution, of peace, of aspiration, such as never look out at us from the cold, handsome faces of the Greeks. In the early ages, however, of Christian art, so little knowledge of right methods was possessed by the painters, that their pictures are necessarily full of technical errors. They were like children who know only a few words and can with difficulty express their thoughts. These Italian painters had in their minds very beautiful thoughts, and there is a peculiar charm in the lisping language in which they strive to speak what is in them. The subjects of their pictures continued for long to be the old conventional series imposed by the Church, but, when treated by a free and reverent exercise of genius, they become surprisingly alive; although often repeated, these sacred pictures are, at least after the period of Giotto, no longer really monotonous like the Byzantine paintings and mosaics.

Never was the *power* of the Roman Church greater than during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but it was a power based on pride, and the Popes were more occupied in adding to their territories and humbling their political enemies than in feeding the flock of Christ. When most sorely needed there came flowing into the world a fresh torrent of spiritual energy.

Its source was the astonishing ardour and simplicity of soul of one truly spiritual man, whose name lives on, untarnished, through the centuries : S. Francis of Assisi. Born to riches, he abandoned them to make poverty his "Bride," and while still young (only twenty-five years of age) he dedicated his life to God. Very soon he discovered his true work. It was to preach to the poor, not as a superior, but as a brother and friend. He had made himself a beggar that he might share their poverty, and there was no form of sin or degradation that could repel his love. He came into the world like a new revelation of the love of God, and men followed him and refused to leave him. Even the dumb creatures loved him, feeling safe in his protecting presence. His creed seems to have been the very simple belief that God intended every one to be happy, and in order to be happy they must be good. Francis, we read, loved every living thing, so he preached even to the birds, and bade them remember God in their songs.¹ And he remonstrated with a wolf which had wrought havoc among the neighbouring flocks, and the wolf by putting his paw into the hand of S. Francis vowed amendment of his ways. In wolfish men he stirred penitence and a new tenderness of heart. Those who loved him have left innumerable tales of the artless beauty of his character. Many believed that a seraph had come straying into the world in human form. The seraphs, we remember (painted always in symbolic red), were the adoring spirits placed nearest in heaven to the throne of God. And soon the rumour grew that upon the hands and feet of this Christ-like man had been imprinted the marks of his Saviour's passion. In this story we have the key to all mediæval symbolism. Men felt in S. Francis the power of the Christ-life, and so they attributed to him the visible marks of the nails. In pictures these *stigmata* are not always represented as wounds, but sometimes are indicated by little flashes of light breaking out from the hands and feet.

Living at the same time as S. Francis was the other great S. Dominic

¹ See illustration, p. 42.

thirteenth century preacher, S. Dominic. His was a very different type of character, and by birth he was a Spaniard. He, too, felt called to the work of preaching; and his especial aim was to confute heresy, and to restate with authoritative clearness some of the disregarded doctrines of the faith. He too embraced poverty, and addressed his preaching chiefly to the unlearned mass of men.

Mendicant
Friars,
1210 and
1215

By S. Francis and S. Dominic were founded in 1210 and 1215 the two great Orders of Mendicant Friars, also known as preaching friars. They differed in many ways from the monastic orders which preceded them, in particular because their efforts were directed to the saving of the souls of others rather than their own.

New
churches

The founding of these Orders led to a great religious revival which in its turn brought about a revolution in art. It was necessary to have more churches, and for these to be large. The result of this demand was that a new style of architecture, not really congenial to Italy, was adopted. For a time the Gothic style, which attains its perfection only in northern countries, prevailed. The new churches were large and plain, and built roughly of brick, the material most easy to obtain. Sometimes the front (or *façade*) would be thinly overlaid with a veneer of marble by way of decoration, whilst inside the vast spaces of blank wall were adorned no longer with mosaics, but with frescoes. There had been other processes of wall-painting before, *e.g.*, in the Catacombs, but the later fresco paintings were executed in this way. A coating of plaster (a mixture made with lime and finely pounded marble) was first laid over the brick wall. Then, while this plaster foundation was still wet, the painter would quickly and boldly brush in his colours. The picture thus became a part of the wall, and the effect of these fresco paintings, when in good condition, is very pleasing. The colours are naturally paler than in oil painting, but they are proportionately soft. And, as the work had to be done quickly, there is a freedom and an almost living grace in the lines of the figures which too rich a clothing of colour tends to conceal.

Frescoes

The walls of the churches became thus a pictorial Bible; and, while the burning words of a Franciscan or Dominican friar rang out from the pulpit, the eye could follow each sacred event on the wall. Such was the vivid and effective way in which the gospel was again "preached to the poor". Added to the gospel, it is true, there were the legends of the saints, which are also painted for us on the walls of mediæval churches. And after his death, the story of S. Francis himself became a very favourite subject with Italian artists. Now religion and art were working harmoniously together towards one end, and we approach the first period of striking progress in the art of painting.

Nearly all the well-known painters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries belong to what is known as the Tuscan School.

There are two ways in which the word *School* is used when applied to artists and their work. We speak of the artists living in one period, or in one district, and practising a somewhat similar method of painting as belonging to a *School*. We should say, for instance, that Sir Joshua Reynolds belonged to the early British School, and Jean François Millet to the modern French School. In a narrower sense, we speak of the disciples or followers of one particular master as belonging to his school, e.g., Luini is said to belong to the School of Leonardo da Vinci. It was in Tuscany that the revival of art began, in architecture and sculpture, as well as in painting; hence the term *Tuscan School*. Schools of Paintings

Yet even before we reach the great names of the thirteenth century, there had been a kind of artistic dawn in Tuscany, about which very little is definitely known. There are three famous early Tuscan masters who were formerly classed with Giotto as reformers and innovators, but they are now regarded as holding a place apart. These are Niccolo Pisano, Duccio of Siena, and Cimabue. The early Tuscan School

Of these three by far the most accomplished artist was Niccolo Pisano. His home was near Pisa, on the sea-coast, and he excelled both as architect and sculptor. His influence Niccolo Pisano

was far reaching, and many assert that the whole after-development both of painting and sculpture in Italy followed the direction first determined by him. It was by combining the study of antiquity with the study of nature, that he achieved his own triumphs and also set other artists on the right track.

Duccio of
Siena living
1339

Contemporary with Niccolo Pisano lived Duccio of Siena, a painter whose work is confined chiefly to his own town, though we have some specimens of it in our National Gallery (Nos. 566, 1139, 1140, and 1330). He follows the Byzantine rules, but succeeds in putting so much gentle, dreamy expression into his faces that they have a quaint beauty in spite of their defective drawing. Our illustration shows the well-known Madonna of the Rucellai Chapel in the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Though long attributed to Cimabue this is now believed to be the work of Duccio of Siena; and many critics are of opinion that he deserves more recognition than has hitherto been granted him.

Florence
and Vasari

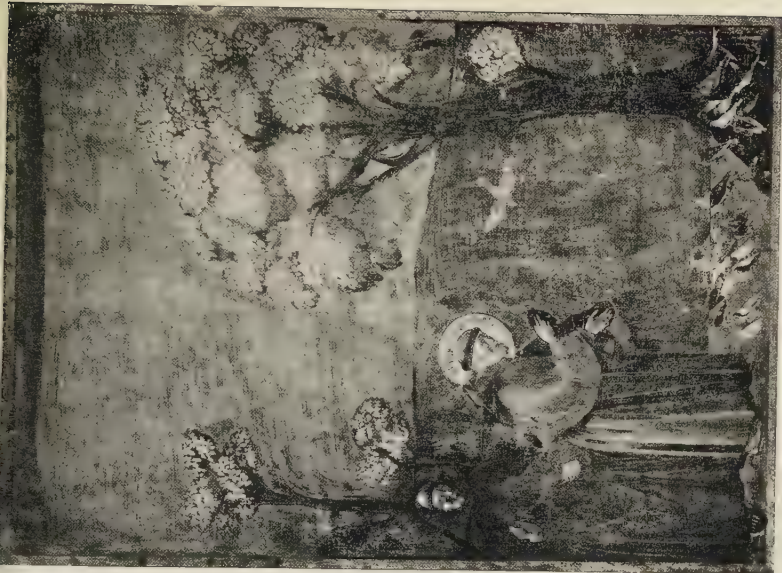
But of all the towns in Tuscany where painters lived and worked none is so famous as Florence. A small city, built on the two sides of the river Arno, and picturesquely surrounded by hills, it became the birth-place and home of many of the greatest artists of the world. The beautiful churches, towers, statues, and pictures which they created still remain to excite our wonder and delight. There also lived in Florence a very fascinating writer, Giorgio Vasari, who has preserved for us so many anecdotes about the various painters of his acquaintance that we seem to know them like friends. He lived in the sixteenth century, and his biographies of famous painters appeared first in 1550. Unfortunately, after the manner of other amusing persons, Vasari is often inaccurate, so that some of his tales must be regarded as legendary rather than true. One of them is about Cimabue, the Florentine contemporary of Niccolo and Duccio.

Cimabue,
1240-
1302 (?)

Vasari tells us that Cimabue, a courtly gentleman, was one of the greatest painters of his day, and that his masterpiece was a beautiful picture of the Madonna, so life-like as to arouse



ENTHRONED MADONNA



ST. FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE BIRDS

the wonder of all beholders. This picture, according to his tale, was borne in procession from the studio to the church of Santa Maria Novella, and its progress was accompanied by such loud cries of admiration that one street through which it passed was called in consequence the "Street of Joy". For centuries we have all believed Vasari, and Cimabue has received the praise for a picture painted really, so the critics now assure us, by Duccio. We know that Vasari had an immense opinion of his city, and he loved to boast about it. No doubt he argued on the lines of that good old Tory, Dr. Johnson, who, when employed as a reporter of parliamentary debates, used to declare that he "never let the Whig dogs have the best of it". Vasari suffered evidently from a similar disinclination to recognize talent anywhere outside Florence. So we cannot always trust him. But the story should not be forgotten even though now discredited. We English in particular should remember it because of the interesting picture now at Windsor painted by Lord Leighton on the subject. It represents the procession carrying Cimabue's Madonna to the church, and in it we see the aristocratic figure of Cimabue himself, the youthful Giotto, who was so soon to outstrip him in fame, and the greatest Florentine of the day, the poet Dante.

Not only is the story of this Madonna now discredited, but the old conception of Cimabue as a reformer in art is abandoned. Sir Martin Conway has well indicated Cimabue's real attitude towards Giotto and the reformers. He writes: "Cimabue is not to be regarded as the first Master of the new epoch, but as one of the last and one of the greatest of the old. What he was at Florence, that was Duccio at Siena—great Masters both of them, Greeks at heart, the last of their artistic race. With Niccolo Pisano, Cimabue, and Duccio the old order passed away, and the promise of an immediate classical revival ceased. Niccolo in his old age experienced and yielded to the new influences. Cimabue and Duccio never gave way to them. They must have felt the changes that were at hand; but the dignity of the Past had mastered their minds, and the old Ideals lived too strongly in them to be

Lord
Leighton's
picture of
Cimabue

abandoned.”¹ The man who did break with the past, and revolutionize the practice of art in Italy, was Giotto di Bondone. Our second illustration (page 42) shows the measure of the cleavage which separates the realistic work of Giotto from that of the Byzantine School.

¹ *Early Tuscan Art* (p. 45).

CHAPTER VII

GIOTTO AND HIS SCHOOL

THE birth of Giotto is generally assigned to the year 1266. Giotto di Bondone, 1266 (?) - 1336 According to the story, his father was a Tuscan peasant who lived in a village among the hills near Florence. There the peasant's child was early entrusted with the care of his father's sheep. He knew nothing probably of the education provided in schools, but he was born with eyes that could see, and a heart to feel the power of the wild solitary country where he lived. Again to misquote Wordsworth, we can imagine Nature saying of him, as she did of Lucy :—

“This child I to myself will take,
He shall be mine, and I will make
A painter of my own.”

One day the famous Cimabue, riding out for his pleasure, noticed the ten-year-old shepherd boy busily occupied in scraping lines upon a rock. Drawing nearer he found that with a sharp fragment of slate the boy was cutting into the face of the stone the likeness of one of his sheep. At once recognizing his talent, Cimabue, with the permission of the father, carried off the little Giotto to his *bottega* (or studio) in Florence, and there set him to work with brushes and paint. We know little of the kind of training received in such a *bottega*, but we do know that before very long Cimabue's fame had suffered eclipse, and Giotto was recognized throughout Italy as the greatest painter of the day.

The Pope heard of him, and sent to Florence to inquire Giotto's about his qualifications. Visited by the Pope's emissary Giotto “O”

drew quickly, with one sweep of his arm, a perfect circle in red paint, offering to give no further proof of his skill than this. The Italians keep it in memory by their expression, "as round as the O of Giotto". Vasari concludes the story with this comment: "whereby the Pope and such of his courtiers as were well versed in the subject, perceived how far Giotto surpassed all the other painters of his time". But although employed for several years at Rome, it is not there that we find Giotto's best work.

Assisi

Much more interesting work is to be seen at Assisi, where, in the two-storied church built over the remains of S. Francis, he has recorded in fresco the principal incidents of the saint's life. It is true that there is some dispute as to whether these frescoes are really the work of Giotto, many critics attributing them to pupils working from his designs and under his direction. One of them represents S. Francis surrounded by flocks of birds, all reverently attentive as he preaches to them about the duty of praise. The dramatic conception of the scene is wholly in the spirit of Giotto (see p. 42).

Santa
Croce at
Florence

In Florence at a later period he painted once more the story of S. Francis, in the Franciscan Church of Santa Croce. And so successfully has he treated scene after scene of this dramatic life that the series of frescoes in the Bardi Chapel gives us a truer insight into the spirit of the Middle Ages than many a learned treatise on the subject.

Deathbed
of S.
Francis

The one chosen for our illustration represents the deathbed of S. Francis. It has been much re-painted since Giotto's day, but the dramatic conception of the subject is truly characteristic. We see S. Francis lying, very beautiful in death, surrounded by a group of friars, each individualized with marvellous power. Awe, excitement, affection, bewilderment—even a touch of scorn—are depicted on the various faces. Some of the kneeling figures, ostensibly occupied in kissing the hands and feet of the dead saint, show unmistakable curiosity about the "sacred wounds," which he humbly tried during his life-time to conceal. One, very daring, has furtively made an opening in the robe, and has thrust an irreverent hand into



THE DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS

GIOTTO

the wound in the side. Only one, among them all, with the rough face of a peasant—too dull to play the hypocrite—seems to catch a glimpse of the angels who are shown high above, carrying away the soul of S. Francis. We learn that even in the thirteenth century, among men who had witnessed the miracle of his self-forgetting life, and who had loved and believed in him, there was a strain of the still familiar matter-of-fact scepticism which always looks askance at what it cannot understand.

Again in Florence, in the upstairs chapel of the Bargello, there is an old faded fresco to which a special interest is attached. For centuries it was lost under a coating of white-wash, which was removed only in 1850. Some Dante enthusiasts (one of them an Englishman) had gathered from Vasari that a portrait of Dante in his youth should be hidden somewhere beneath that whitewash. Very cautiously it was removed, and at last slowly there emerged the unmistakable face. A nail had been run exactly through one eye, and unfortunately in drawing this out a large piece of the cheek came away with it. A good deal of restoration has therefore been necessary. But some of this "restoration" was wilfully incorrect. When young Dante first looked out from the wall at his nineteenth-century lovers he was wearing on his head the celestial colours of his beloved Beatrice in Paradise: red, green, and white. But these are the colours of Sardinia, of the liberators of Italy; and in 1850 the first War of Independence had only just closed in defeat for the patriots. The Tuscan rulers dared not show Dante thus dangerously attired to the citizens of Florence. The green was therefore painted over with chocolate colour, and the portrait given to the world as we now know it.

But Giotto's most complete set of frescoes are in the Arena Chapel at Padua. This building has little architectural beauty, but affords within it ample space for fresco decoration. At the chancel end, covering the entire wall, is a representation of Christ in glory. The frescoes on one side of the chapel consist of scenes from the life of Christ, on the other of scenes from the life of the Virgin, and besides these there are some

The
Bargello
portrait of
Dante

Frescoes in
the Arena
Chapel at
Padua

allegorical figures which all harmonize in thought with the final triumph of Christianity, up to which they lead. Here the fresco-work is not employed with a decorative purpose ; on the contrary, the church serves as a frame to the pictures, and they serve as a means of instruction in religious knowledge. But Giotto, being a true artist, has so blended his colours that a beautiful decorative effect is achieved. The chapel has been described as being like a "gigantic opal in the midst of which the spectator stands". On closer inspection each picture is full of unexpected and often naïve details. Joachim's sheep in the wilderness are so strongly individualized that, if we knew their names, we could not mistake one for the other. The boy Giotto must have learned to understand sheep-nature. A dog running out to greet Joachim is as playfully eager as any dog of our own acquaintance.

In the picture of the Marriage of the Virgin Giotto shows well the vexation of the disappointed suitors, and one of them who is breaking across his knee the futile rod that refused to blossom, has served to inspire many a succeeding artist. For, though later artists understood better the technique of their work, few could excel Giotto in inventiveness and dramatic suggestion. Mr. J. A. Symonds says of him : "His power of telling a story by gesture and acting is unique in its peculiar simplicity".

Giotto's
Campanile

Although strictly not included in our subject, we cannot omit to mention the famous Campanile at Florence. It is the most lovely bell-tower in the world, and seems to spring from the ground like a living thing ; tall, and graceful, and faintly tinged with colour. For into the white marble of which it is built are introduced belts of coloured marble and mosaic ; while carved figures, pointed windows and wreathed pillars break up the vast surface of the tower into separate stages of ascent. But to him, the designer of this glorious Florentine lily—as it is sometimes called—was denied the happiness of beholding it. Before the tower had risen more than a few feet from the ground Giotto had closed his eyes for ever.

We have lingered perhaps too long over this one name, but

Giotto holds a unique place in the history of art. He dared to look at the world through his own penetrating eyes, and, regardless of Byzantine tradition, to paint his scenes from the gospel story or the legends of the saints as they appeared to his own imagination. His name begins a new era. The inscription on his tomb is no empty vaunt: "Ille ego sum, per quem pictura extincta revixit" ("I am he who made Painting which was dead alive again").

The work of Giotto naturally exercised a great influence on other painters of the fourteenth century. Some are in consequence said to belong to his school, and are often called the *Giotteschi*. Of these the best known name is perhaps that of Taddeo Gaddi, whose pictures are interesting although still very archaic. Landini and Spinello Aretino are also classed among the Giotteschi, and we have specimens in the National Gallery of the work of all these three. Painters of the School of Giotto

In all humility and affection Gaddi used often to sign his works: "Taddeo, a disciple of Giotto, the good master". Late in life he is reported to have said: "Art left the world with Giotto, and is sinking every day to a lower level".

It is to be regretted that there is no example of Giotto's work in our National Gallery. But *The Two Apostles*,¹ a fragment of fresco (No. 276) labelled as belonging to his school, supplies a hint of the beauty and expressiveness of his authentic work. We see the bent heads of two venerable old men, with soft grey hair, and faces full of sorrow. One has clasped hands, as though in prayer. The subject of the entire fresco was the burial of S. John the Baptist, and these two were mourners, following their friend to the grave. The vivid manner in which their faces tell the story of their grief recalls the fresco-pictures of Giotto in Padua, Assisi, and the church of Santa Croce in Florence. Fresco in National Gallery

A greater name than any of the above three is that of Andrea Orcagna, a Florentine painter with a great contemporary reputation, but about whose life and work very little is positively known. In our National Gallery we have several examples of his painting. The immense altar-piece (No. 569) of Orcagna, 1308 (?) - 1368

¹ Now attributed to Spinello Aretino.

The Coronation of the Virgin, shows his power in decorative work. For we must remember that all these early paintings were designed for some special place in a church. We know that this picture was placed over the high altar in S. Pietro Maggiore in Florence. Coming from the dazzling sunshine of Italy into the cool, dark church our eyes would at once have been drawn to it. Far away at the end of the chancel, illuminated by tall wax tapers and swinging lamps, we can fancy how the gold background would sparkle, and all the bright-robed figures of the saints would shine like jewels. It would at once serve its purpose of hushing the mind into a consciousness of having entered into the palace of the King of kings.

In London we see it under the full light of a glass roof, and perhaps pore over the monotonous faces in search of some expression of life. This is not just to the artist. In Florence, as worshippers, we should always have been separated from it by a distance of at least twenty or thirty feet: and Orcagna painted with that knowledge in his mind. He was, however, capable of executing more life-like scenes than this, and, although much injured, there are some in Santa Maria Novella, the famous Dominican church of Florence, which are deservedly admired.

In closing this chapter on Giotto we close too a chapter in Italian art. Mr. Berenson tells us that Giotto's great innovation was the correct rendering of "tactile values". He means by this that the human figures appear so real that if touched they would offer resistance, and we fancy that we could walk round them. When this effect is well rendered, our "tactile" imagination accepts the pictured illusion, and we feel that the figures live and are capable of motion. We should try to realize how important this advance was—not only in the department of artistic craftsmanship, but in the mental emancipation resulting from this more vivid rendering of the human form.

The Church, in its desire to draw men's thoughts away from earth, had attempted to repress, not only the evil instincts to which man is subject, but also those innocent affections which are at the root of all that is best in human nature. The Church

had taught asceticism—the mortification of the body and all its natural appetites. But S. Francis, with his doctrine of love, and his joyous delight in all the fair things in God's world, had unconsciously stirred in men a new hunger for happiness. Though himself bound by the vows of poverty and celibacy we cannot regard him as a truly austere ascetic. And Giotto, the outspoken lover of beauty, and all the simple pleasures which are the lawful heritage of man, had in him no strain of asceticism at all. He could understand the spiritual raptures of the saint, and could also see, with honest, grateful eyes, the warm human love of the Virgin mother for her Child.

He was essentially the artist; delighting in all fair things which met the eye or stirred the fancy, and eager to share his delight with others by showing them, to the best of his ability, what he saw.

CHAPTER VIII

FRA ANGELICO

Fra
Angelico
contrasted
with Giotto

WITH the Franciscan movement in religion the name of Giotto, the artist, is indissolubly connected. In the same manner the name of Fra Angelico is connected with the rival Order of the Dominicans. He too stands alone, almost without visible artistic parentage, and his work is unique. As contrasted with Giotto's it shows a more delicate appreciation of beauty. Giotto, like a narrative poet, gives us incidents, and makes them live by depicting movement and dramatic expression. His aim is to interest the mind. Fra Angelico, like a lyric poet, gives permanence to moments of intense feeling. He seems to lay his hand on the throb of penitence, or the exaltation of prayer and praise, and, by the magic of his art, to bid them vibrate for ever. He betrays no signs of violence; but his tranquillity and classic restraint are deeply affecting. His aim is to touch the heart.

His birth,
1387

This singularly gifted man was born in 1387 at Vicchio, a small Florentine village not far from the birthplace of Giotto. He was trained, so some say, in the *bottega* of a Florentine artist named Starnina. But as the works of this artist seem all to have perished, his personality remains very dim. It is generally agreed, however, that Fra Angelico's spiritual master was probably the great Sienese painter, Simone di Martino, more familiarly called Simone Memmi, who lived from about 1284-1344.

Simone
Memmi,
1284 (?) -
1344

As there was no loquacious biographer, like Vasari, to record the lives and describe the pictures of those rival artists of Siena, their names have sunk into obscurity. Much of their

work has even been attributed to other hands, and one of the most interesting subjects of modern research is the inquiry into the authorship of these falsely attributed pictures. The fame of Simone Memmi increases year by year. In some of his well-authenticated pictures at Siena there is the same sweet, graceful, we might almost say "intense" type of beauty which is found in the later work of Fra Angelico. There was certainly an affinity of mind between the two men.

At the age of twenty, the future bearer of the angelic name entered the Dominican convent at Fiesole, the beautiful hill-town near Florence, and was known at first as Fra Giovanni,—plain "Brother John". It was the holiness of his life which made the other friars change his name. Vasari paints in words a beautiful portrait of him.

"This truly angelic father spent his whole life in the service of God and his fellow-creatures. He was a man of simple habits, and most saintly in all his ways. He kept himself from all worldliness, and was so good a friend to the poor that I think his Soul must be already in heaven. He worked continually at his art, but would never paint anything except sacred subjects. He might have been a wealthy man, but he did not care for money, and used to say that true riches consist in being content with little. He might have enjoyed high dignities, both in his convent and in the world, but he cared nothing for these things, saying that he who would practise painting has need of quiet, and should be free from worldly cares, and that he who would do the work of Christ must live continually with him. He was never known to be impatient with the brothers—a thing to me almost incredible! And when people asked him for a picture, he always replied that with the Prior's approval he would try to satisfy their wishes. He never corrected or re-touched his works, but left them as he first painted them, saying that such was the will of God. He never took his pencil up without a prayer, and could not paint a Crucifixion without the tears running down his cheeks. And the saints which he painted are more like saints in face and expression than those of any other master. And since it seemed that

Fra
Angelico
joins the
Dominican
Order

Vasari's
description
of Fra
Angelico

saints and angels of beauty so divine could only be painted by the hand of an angel, he was always called Fra Angelico."¹

We should almost fear that Vasari was again romancing had we not the pictures themselves to testify to the truth of his words. But to see them we must go to Florence, where his best fresco work and some of his best panel pictures are to be found.

Panel
pictures

The
Triptych

The
Predella

We may explain here that besides fresco painting there soon arose the practice of painting on lids of chests, on doors of cupboards, or on detached pieces of wood, usually called panels. These were portable, and often two were fastened together with hinges, so that they could be closed like a book when moved. Such a pair of panels would be called a *diptych*. More usual still was the *triptych* form, which consisted of a large central panel flanked by a narrower one on each side. These outer panels, or wings, could be closed, and even locked, so as to preserve the paintings from injury. Below the triptych, which was placed as a rule above the altar, it was usual to add a long narrow picture called a *predella*. A complete altar-piece consisted therefore of a triptych and predella. Later the custom arose of adding more and more panels, so that a whole series of pictures, all bearing on the central theme, came to be clustered about it. An altar-piece of this elaborate structure is known as a *polyptych*. One of the most famous is the Ghent altar-piece by the brothers van Eyck described in chapter xv.

Tempera

In all these panel pictures the colours used were mixed with size, gum, or sometimes with yolk of egg and the juices of fruits. This medium is called *tempera* or *distemper*, and it differs in effect from oil by giving a drier surface to the picture. Varnish, however, was sometimes washed over the tempera, and then it is difficult for the unpractised eye to distinguish one medium from the other:

"Christ"
in the
National
Gallery

To return to Fra Angelico, we must not judge him by the one authentic specimen of his work in our National Gallery (No. 663). It is a predella, taken from a church near Fiesole for which it was painted. Called simply *Christ*, it represents a vast crowd of the Blessed: patriarchs, prophets, saints and martyrs, and

¹ Mrs. Ady's translation in *Painters of Florence* (v., 101).

many black-robed members of his own Dominican brotherhood. Vasari speaks of all these forms as being "so beautiful that they appear to be truly beings of Paradise". The ordinary observer is hardly likely to agree with him, but the picture deserves close study, and will certainly win its way to the hearts of some. Yet there is not scope here, in these small figures, for Fra Angelico to reveal his power.

Nor is it just to form an estimate of his work from the coloured angels, with flaming forehead and trumpet or drum in the hand, which have become so popular in England. Most of these are copied from the frame of one of his Madonnas, and, though graceful in form and attractive in colour, they are mere decorative details quite distinct from the picture itself. Yet the type of angel conceived by Fra Angelico, and appearing in so many of his pictures, is among the loveliest of his creations; and to those who are acquainted only with the pretty painted figures on their gilt background, the sight of a true Fra Angelico angel will be a revelation. At the same time virile and ethereal; interested, and yet half puzzled, in their intercourse with men; energetically alive, yet with eyes that are full of a dreamy aloofness,—these angels of Fra Angelico could not have been called into being except by the imagination of a man who was at once artist and saint.

In a panel picture in Florence, forming part of a *Last Judgment*, Fra Angelico shows us the borderland as it may be called of Paradise. We see a dance in heaven, where each newly arrived saint has found an angel-partner, no doubt the guardian-spirit who has been watching over him during life; and, wading deep in flowers, hand clasped in hand, we see them moving in a ring through the eternal meadows. This scene, entitled *The Dance of the Angels*, should be familiar to the reader through reproductions. Yet even in this we do not see the painter in the full maturity of his powers.

To know him aright we must visit San Marco. It was in San Marco, 1436 that the great Cosimo de' Medici, leading citizen and benefactor of Florence, assigned this convent to the use of the Dominicans. Thither Fra Angelico, ripe in years and artistic

experience, went too with the brotherhood, and began the great work of his life. San Marco is no longer a religious house, the friars have long since been scattered, and the Italian Government has converted it into a public museum. But no spot in Italy retains more completely the old beautiful spirit of mediæval devotion. Here on the walls we see the frescoes of Fra Angelico, the actual pictures which he "never began without a prayer," the Crucifixions painted while "the tears were running down his cheeks". It is impossible to express in words the deep impression made by the first sight of them. Seldom can one soul reveal to another the hidden springs of religious emotion which may convert the life on earth into a present Paradise. In these pictures Fra Angelico lays bare the secret of his own heart-satisfying intimacy with the things of God. For in the beautiful spiritual faces, and the passionate adoring attitudes created by his imagination, we can see the ingenuous piety of the painter himself.

Frescoes in
San Marco

From among the many treasures in San Marco it is hard to make a choice. The Crucifixion in the chapter house is considered one of his finest works. It is not intended to give an historical representation of the scene on Calvary; but the Cross is made the central object of thought, while at its foot are gathered a wonderful group of saintly persons whose names are famous in the Church. To the left stand the Virgin, S. John, and several other figures. On the right, carefully individualized, are many striking characters, among them S. Jerome, S. Benedict, and S. Bernard, founders of the monastic system. But most interesting of all are the figures of S. Dominic and S. Francis. Fra Angelico painted over and over again the founder of his own Order, never with more care than in this picture. S. Dominic is kneeling, and on his forehead rests the star, which, according to the legend, appeared on it at the moment of his birth. His head is strong and finely shaped, the forehead is broad, and the restraint and dignity of the face bespeak the wisdom, not only of the scholar, but of a great ruler over men. In contrast to him S. Francis is depicted with less marked features and in an attitude of rapt ecstasy.

Portraits of
S. Dominic
and S.
Francis

There is no hint of inferiority, but in one the visionary, in the other the thinker is admirably presented.

Less intellectually powerful, but more touching, is the great Crucifixion at the end of the cloister. At the foot of it kneels one single grief-stricken figure, that of S. Dominic in prayer.

The frescoes in the cells are full of interest. It was the task of the "painter-brother" to adorn the new convent to which the Order had been transferred. Each cell is very small : facing the door is a window, and beside it just space for a bed. Above this on the wall, Fra Angelico has painted his frescoes. He is reported to have said that as the one window gave the friar his sight of the visible world, he would make a second through which to gaze into the unseen world, a "window into heaven". And so each tiny cell contains its own picture, possibly chosen with some reference to the wishes or temperament of the good brother who inhabited it.

One of the most beautiful is *The Transfiguration*, which is often reproduced in black and white. Another (very rich in colour), *The Resurrection*, shows the group of women at the open tomb, the shining angel, and above them in a bright mandorla the risen Christ.

Every picture, as we pass on from cell to cell, is a fresh surprise, and each opens a new "window into heaven". For beauty of light and colour, and for strongly marked portraiture, perhaps none excels *The Coronation of the Virgin* (see illustration, p. 58). In the upper part of the picture we see her in heaven, bending forward to receive from the hands of Christ a richly jewelled crown. Both these celestial figures are robed in dazzling white, and thrown into relief by a background of soft rainbow tints. Below are the kneeling figures of six saints. The two in the centre, S. Dominic and S. Francis, are again very skilfully portrayed. The S. Dominic, always painted with reverential care, is as fine as any in San Marco; but the S. Francis, with uplifted hands showing the sacred wounds, is really beautiful, and quite free from any trace of over-wrought excitement. Here Fra Angelico does full

justice to the founder of the rival Order. Of the remaining figures two are in the Dominican habit: S. Peter Martyr is known by the wound on his head and the other is S. Thomas Aquinas. The two old men with beards are S. Benedict and S. Paul the Hermit.

Christ in
Limbo

One other peculiarly interesting fresco represents the descent of Christ into *Limbo*. This name, meaning "borderland," was applied by the mediæval Church to the neutral region where it was believed that the souls of the unbaptized, and of persons not guilty of deliberate sin, were confined after death. We read in S. Peter (1, iii. 19)—and the mystery is not explained—that Christ "preached unto the spirits in prison". This is the subject of Fra Angelico's picture. On the right we see the figure of Christ bearing a banner, and, from the mandorla which surrounds him, shedding brilliant light into the place of darkness. The door, wrenched from its hinges, has fallen flat, and crushed beneath it is a demon—the defeated warder, we presume, of that strange prison house. The released spirits are rushing forward with a vehemence rarely seen in Fra Angelico's pictures. The first, a very old man, springs eagerly forward and grasps with his two hands the outstretched hand of Christ. This is thought to be Adam. Behind follows a dark roughly clad figure, supposed to be John the Baptist. And behind again, pressing out from among the cavernous rocks are others, men and women, all gazing at Christ. And further back still we can see halo after halo, making waves of light in the darkness, and suggesting an endless crowd. We show this too in our illustration.

1447

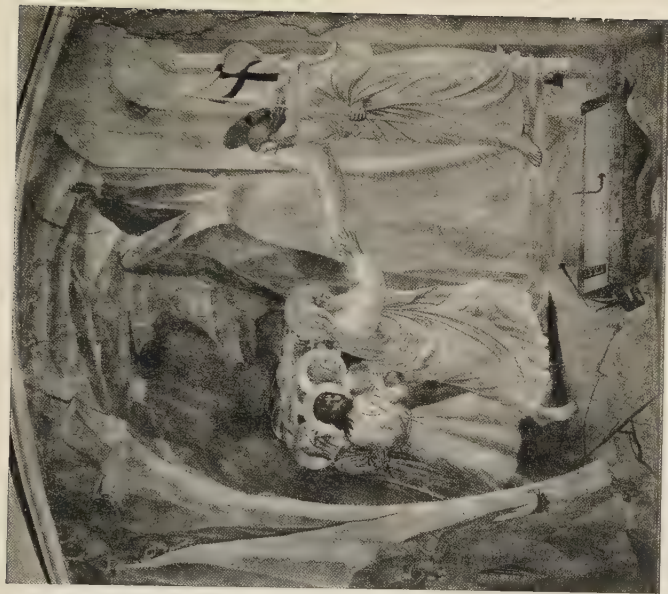
Later in life Fra Angelico went to Rome, and painted some fine frescoes for the Pope. In them his artistic powers reach their fullest development. It is a mistake to think of him exclusively as the saint; he was also the observing and conscientious artist. In colour he is noted for his love of pure elemental tints, and he understood how to throw up the brilliant white he so often employs by the subtle use of shade. No artistic device was neglected that could heighten the beauty of his effects. His love of nature and his appreciation of architecture are



THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN

FRA ANGELICO

Fresco in the Convent of San Marco, Florence



CHRIST IN LIMBO

FRA ANGELICO

Fresco in the Convent of San Marco, Florence

shown in his truthful representation of flowers and trees and buildings, all of which can be recognized as connected with the places where he worked. He consecrated his mental gifts to God, but he cultivated them with all diligence. His spiritual insight had not grown dim nor had his hand lost its cunning when Death led him away to Paradise.

Death at
Rome,
1455

CHAPTER IX

MASACCIO AND HIS FOLLOWERS

WITH the fifteenth century we enter on that momentous era which witnessed the "New Birth" of the human race. Old things were about to pass away ; the gropings after philosophic truth, the timorous investigations of nature, were to give place to the assured, triumphant outlook on life which was born of knowledge. With the fifteenth century came the re-discovery of Greek literature and art, the swift communication of thought from mind to mind through the medium of the printing press, and the widening even of the bounds of the world. Swinburne's words about the emancipation of man in our own age apply with even greater force to that crisis in history known as the Renaissance :—

"For his face is set to the east, and his feet on the past and its dead ;
The sun re-arisen is his priest, and the heat thereof hallows his head."

Masaccio,
1401 (?)—
1428

In the story of art we notice that the century opens with the name of Masaccio, the consummate Florentine artist who boldly pierced for others "new windows onto earth". Fra Angelico still looked back at the beautiful vanishing past. Masaccio, at the parting of the ways, has been described as grasping with one hand Giotto, with the other reaching out to Raphael :—

"Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view
Who stand upon the threshold of the new."¹

Even the names of the two artists are suggestive ; Fra Angelico, meekly robed in the uniform of a monastic Order, moved in thought among the angels ; Masaccio, rough and disorderly in

¹ From Edmund Waller's stanzas on *Old Age*.

his appearance, his coat smudged over with paint, was absorbed in the beauties of earth. His name, Tommaso, was soon shortened to *Maso*, and the addition *accio* generally indicates something big and ugly, and perhaps bad. But Vasari expressly tells us that "this nick-name was given not on account of his bad disposition, for he was good-nature itself, and was always ready to render others a service," but because of his slovenly inattention to dress, and his careless mismanagement of his affairs. But this carelessness was due to his love of art, the one object to which he devoted "his thoughts and his soul". Browning gives a good rendering of the nick-name when he calls him "hulking Tom".

Who taught him the rudiments of his craft is not authentically known, but it is thought that he was the pupil of one Masolino, who had studied together with Fra Angelico in the *bottega* of Starnina. Gradually, as the result of careful modern research, more is being learned about Masolino ("little" Tom, or "nice little" Tom), whose name very naturally was often confused with that of the more famous painter. Of Masolino's work we have not time to speak, but the finest specimens of Masaccio's are to be found in the Carmine Church at Florence. One of the side-chapels, the Brancacci Chapel, is adorned with frescoes, some of them being now attributed to Masolino, some being accepted unanimously as the work of Masaccio. The six acknowledged to be his exhibit that easy mastery over all the technical difficulties of the art of painting which has rendered his name famous. His human figures are rounded as in life, their attitudes are free and natural. The perspective of the buildings or landscape in the background is correct, and so much animation is imparted to the scenes he represents that we seem to be looking on life. Vasari tells us that "he was the first to give his figures beautiful attitudes, natural movement, vivacity of expression, and a relief similar to reality. Instead of representing figures standing on tip-toe, as his predecessors had done, he placed their feet firmly on the ground and fore-shortened them properly, and he understood perspective so well that he could apply it to every variety of view. He

Masolino

Vasari's
opinion of
Masaccio

was careful to make the colour of his draperies agree with the tones of his flesh, and gave them the same few simple folds that we see in nature. And it may be truly said that the things that were done before his time can be called paintings, but that his works are life, truth, and nature."

Frescoes
in the
Brancacci
Chapel

The six frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel treat of scenes from S. Peter's life, some of them legendary, some in accordance with Scripture. The first two, representing Adam and Eve in Paradise, and then their expulsion from it by the angel with a flaming sword, are said to allude symbolically to the office of S. Peter as the keeper of the gate of heaven. The nude figures in *The Expulsion* are so perfectly modelled that Raphael and Michelangelo and Leonardo, the greatest masters of Italian art, stood before them as learners, and made no secret of the debt they owed to Masaccio.

The
Tribute-
Money

The Tribute-Money fresco is considered to be the finest, so faithful is it to dramatic truth. S. Peter, stooping to draw the coin from the fish's mouth, has flushed red from the exertion; the tax-collector looks heated too as he urges his claim to the money; while the figure of Christ who issues his command (a very impressive figure in its majestic composure) lifts the whole scene from prose into poetry. Among the crowd, as one of the apostles, Masaccio has introduced his own portrait; a form, says Vasari, "so life-like that it seems to live and breathe". The compact, vigorous frame and the square head show the practical, observant, painstaking artist.

Masaccio's
death at
Rome

Masaccio, during his short life of twenty-seven years, won neither money nor fame. He was too deeply absorbed in his art to trouble about them. But in consequence probably of debts, or the importunities of a Florentine tax-collector (for whom no miracle made provision), Masaccio, in 1428, hurriedly forsook Florence. As a fact it is the tax-paper left at his house, on which the word "Gone" is written, that enables us to fix the date; and the additional words, "Dicesi morto a Roma" (he is said to have died at Rome), gives us the only record of his death. Tradition adds that he was poisoned by some one of the many inferior artists who were envious of him. One

thing alone is certain, that his known works are very few, and that they are superb.¹

The three great painters to be next mentioned show such marked traces of affinity with each other that mistakes have often been made in the attributing of pictures to one or the other of them. Fra Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, and Filippino Lippi are related to each other in a descending scale as master and pupil.

Lippo Lippi, born at Florence near the beginning of the fifteenth century, was a painter-friar like Fra Angelico, but in every other way a contrast to him. A poor little homeless orphan, he was placed at the age of eight in the convent of the Carmine. The boy had no vocation for the cloister, but he showed early a taste for painting, and the sagacious friars who had adopted him encouraged this natural bent.

He must certainly have seen both Masolino and Masaccio painting the frescoes in the neighbouring Carmine church. He could have had no better training than that of watching a great master at work. Within himself, concealed under the convent uniform, stirred a boisterous love of the world; and of all the ferment and activity and tempestuous beauty of his own Florentine world in particular. He was a monk against the grain; he was a painter by the compulsion of genius. By watching Masaccio he learned how to give expression to the love of beauty in his own heart. Browning, in his poem on Fra Lippo Lippi, describes well the dismay of the pious friars as they looked at the heathenishly beautiful pictures of the waif they had reared. True, he painted the set subjects; the Mother and Child, the saints, even the assemblies of the blessed in Paradise; but he gave to all an air of realism, often of actual portraiture, that was startling. He was frankly a lover of this world, and there is rarely in his pictures any sign of the conflict between pagan and Christian ideals which we shall have to notice in Botticelli. This unwilling bondsman to monastic rule broke away later in life from restraint, and married a nun. But he wore the friar's frock to the end of his days, and the prior of his convent seems to have condoned

¹ The National Gallery now possesses a fine example (No. 3046)

his irregularities for the sake of the honourable notice attracted by his fame to the Carmelite brotherhood.

Nativity by
Fra Lippo
Lippi

Our illustration is of the famous panel picture *The Nativity* now in the Berlin Gallery. It is regarded by all as one of the finest he ever painted. Mr. Edward Strutt writes thus:—

“Moreover of all Fra Filippo’s works, with the sole exception perhaps of his Spoleto frescoes, this Nativity is the only painting in which a genuine religious spirit prevails, so sweet and solemn as to appear like a sinner’s peace-giving vision of grace. In this solitary instance Fra Filippo has attained the spiritual elevation of his Dominican rival, showing us what an incomparable artist he might have been, had his exquisite sense of form and colour been ennobled by a soul like that of Fra Angelico. . . . That Fra Filippo regarded this painting as one of his best works may be inferred from the fact that it is the only picture, besides the Sant Ambrogio ‘Coronation,’ which bears his signature.”¹

Patronage
of Cosimo
de’ Medici

The above-mentioned *Coronation of the Virgin*, once in the Church of Sant’ Ambrogio, is now in the Florence Accademia. It is this picture—the best known and perhaps the greatest of all Lippi’s works—which Browning describes in his poem. Fra Lippo Lippi was appreciated and constantly employed by Cosimo de’ Medici, the kindly despot who won from the gratitude of the Florentines the title of “Father of his people”. The greater number of Lippi’s pictures were commissions from Cosimo: sometimes an altar-piece for a Florentine church, sometimes a picture to be offered as a gift to the Pope, or some foreign prince. He also executed many paintings for the adornment of the Medici palace, and the two *lunettes* in our Gallery were among these; the crest of Cosimo de’ Medici, three feathers within a ring, can be seen in No. 666.

Lunettes
in the
National
Gallery

A *lunette* is the name given to the semi-circular space in an arched doorway, which surmounts the door itself. These two pictures (666 and 667) are exquisite examples of painting in tempera. It is hard to determine which is the more perfect of

¹ *Fra Filippo Lippi*, by Edward C. Strutt (pp. 53, 54).



THE NATIVITY
FRA LIPPO LIPPI
Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin

the two, although, as a rule, the preference is given to *The Annunciation*. Here the reverent attitude of the Virgin in her softly coloured robes, the glowing lilies, and the peacock-tinted wings of the angel, combine to produce an effect of harmony that not only delights the senses but expresses also the true spirit of religious emotion.

But the other picture, *S. John the Baptist with Six other Saints*, has an extraordinary charm. The seven saints on their garden seat—with the glimpse of sky behind them, and the delicate flowery carpet in the foreground—are absorbed in their heavenly talk. S. John the Baptist, with the cross in his hand, no doubt recalls the scene on the banks of Jordan where he recognized the "Lamb of God"; and the doctor-saints—Cosmo and Damian—on each side of him, are "lost in wonder, love and praise". Old S. Anthony with his knotted stick tries to fix the wandering attention of S. Peter Martyr, the only one of the group who looks towards the outer world (that knife in his head may prove adverse to concentration of mind). But on the left, how rapt is the expression of S. Francis, how artlessly pure the face of the deacon Laurence in his perennial youth. Coming from the noisy Strand, and all the lined faces of men apparently ready to sell their souls (if they could command a sufficiently alluring market value), here, in contrast, we find unruffled peace, and the leisure for contemplating divine mysteries. Lover of the world as he was, Lippi could understand too the spell of the cloistered life.

His greatest artistic achievements remain in Italy, and in fresco work he shows a strength and freedom of design hardly to be expected from the study of his smaller pictures.

Sandro Filipepi, better known as Botticelli, was for some time the pupil of Fra Lippo Lippi, and worked under him both at Florence and Prato. The nickname of *Botticello* is said to be derived from the "little barrel" which was the sign of his elder brother's shop, by trade a leather merchant. In consequence all the brothers came to be known as the *Botticelli*; and, in spite of the more accurate nomenclature adopted by the

National Gallery authorities, it is as Botticelli, and not Filipepi, that this painter is familiarly known.

His pictures have a peculiar attraction for us in the present day. No other painter of the fifteenth century seems to be so completely penetrated by the many conflicting forces of the great Renaissance period. Botticelli seems to have in a high degree the double power of feeling intensely and at the same time reflecting on what he feels. He is not simple, like Fra Angelico, in his perception of the spiritual beauty of expression; nor simple like Masaccio, in his direct and masterly rendering of the human form. He hesitates, looking first at heaven and then at earth, unable to make his choice; and it is this pathetic, wistful indecision that draws us again and again to his pictures.

Court of
Lorenzo
de' Medici

He was attached, we must remember, to the court of Cosimo's grandson—that princely lover and patron of all the fine arts—Lorenzo the Magnificent. Botticelli must have shared in the enthusiasm for the newly found treasures of Greek art, although it is with apparent reluctance that he yields to the spell of revived paganism. He must have mixed with the eager Florentine philosophers who, with fearless independence, were ready to reason out every possible theory of morals, and every problem of human destiny. He must have known all the clever young poets who, enamoured of the classics, felt driven to spend their days in the production of elegant verse. He certainly knew Politian, and from his poem *Giostra*¹ Botticelli borrowed the ideas which are embodied in his best known pictures on classical subjects. Three especially should be noted. His *Birth of Venus* (in the Uffizi at Florence) shows her rising above the sea—a wind-blown figure draped in yellow hair—and slowly drifting to the shore, where a nymph waits to wrap her in a rosy mantle. The whole scene corresponds with Politian's poetic description in the *Giostra*. No. 915 in our Gallery, *Mars and Venus*, is also based on the description in the poem. The two faces are thought by some to be portraits of Giuliano, Lorenzo's popular brother (who was treacherously murdered in the Duomo), and the famous beauty La Simonetta.

Politian's
Giostra

¹ *Stanze per la Giostra di Giuliano de' Medici*,



PRIMAVERA (SPRING)

Primavera (or *Spring*) is the most famous of all Botticelli's Botticelli's pictures. It too was painted, like the two preceding ones, "Spring" for Lorenzo de' Medici's villa at Castello. It is an allegory, showing Venus as the presiding goddess over all the awakening forces of the new-born year. Above her is a blindfold Cupid with drawn bow aiming his arrow towards the flower-strewn earth. The group to the right are said to be Zephyr (the west wind), Flora (goddess of flowers), and a beautiful ideal figure representing Spring. To the left are the three Graces in soft white "chiffon" draperies, and dancing on feet so full of springing motion that they seem about to leave the ground. To the extreme left stands Mercury (again a portrait of Lorenzo's brother Giuliano), who with his wand is supposed to be driving away the clouds of winter. It is all gaiety and motion; an idyll of joy. But the types are not Greek; there is a strain of melancholy in them that betrays the temperament of the painter.

Walter Pater suggests an explanation of this persistent Pater's melancholy. He thinks that Botticelli had adopted a theory, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* held by one of the philosophers of the day, that the human race had descended from those angels who, when war arose in heaven, had remained neutral, fighting neither for God nor his enemies. This (to quote from Pater) "interprets much of the peculiar sentiment with which he infuses his profane and sacred persons,—comely, and in a certain sense like angels, but with a sense of displacement or loss about them, . . . always attractive, clothed sometimes by passion with a character of loveliness and energy, but saddened perpetually by the shadow upon them of the great things from which they shrink. It is this which gives to his Madonnas their unique expression and charm. . . . For with Botticelli she too, though she holds in her hands 'the Desire of all nations,' is one of those who are 'neither for God nor his enemies': and her choice is on her face. Her trouble is in the very caress of the mysterious Child, whose gaze is always far from her, and who had already that sweet look of devotion which men have never been able altogether to love, and which still makes

the born saint an object almost of suspicion to his earthly brethren." ¹

Madonnas
in the
Uffizi

In the Uffizi Gallery at Florence are two of these Madonnas; one is known as *The Madonna of the Pomegranate*, and in this picture the Child is peculiarly attractive; the other is *The Madonna of the Magnificat*, and this, owing to the splendour of the colouring, the graceful grouping of the figures, and the artistic power shown in every detail, is one of Botticelli's best works. Mother and Child are surrounded by angels with the red-brown wavy hair and long narrow faces for which the Medici children are said to have been the models. We may see this type of angel in our own lovely round picture (No. 635), which, although now withdrawn from the list of authentic Botticellis, retains all the most marked characteristics of his manner. Our third illustration is a favourite and typical example from the Louvre, *The Virgin, Infant Jesus and S. John*.

As a draughtsman, he excels in the delicate grace of his contours, and the lightness and easy sweep of every line produces in many pictures the irresistible illusion of motion. This is felt perhaps most strongly in *Spring* and *The Birth of Venus*.

The
Centaur,
1478

One of his finest pictures, not so generally known as *Spring*, is *The Centaur*, our second illustration. It hangs in one of the private rooms of the Pitti Palace, open to visitors but once a week, and so the hurried tourist may very likely miss it. This picture represents Pallas Athene, with the calm, regular features of a Greek goddess, laying her hand on the savage head of a centaur. His attitude is fiercely resentful; the expression of his face—a degraded human face—tells of a lawless preference for base pleasures. The grace, purity and nobility of Athene are enhanced by contrast with this barbarous creature. Her white robe is sprinkled with clusters of three interlaced diamond rings, the special device of Lorenzo; they have the charming lightness of a shamrock pattern. Her head is wreathed with olive, the emblem of peace, each exquisite leaf being finely drawn and coloured. The picture is said to have been painted to com-

¹ *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (pp. 44-46).



PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR

BOTTICELLI



THE VIRGIN, INFANT JESUS AND ST. JOHN

BOTTICELLI

memorate the defeat of the Pazzi conspiracy, in which Giuliano had met his death, and Lorenzo himself had been dangerously wounded. We see in it the triumph of wisdom and peace over the forces of disorder. It is allied in thought to the myths of S. George and the dragon, and the triumph of good over evil. But here it is Sandro the doubter who paints the myth. His beast is neither slain nor conquered; under the white hand of divinest purity, it still remains stubbornly perverse, and presents a parable of the untamable passions of human nature. Yet in the perfect loveliness of Athene we have a vision of the truly human, which Botticelli saw, and towards which our hopes are still directed. For him the realization of this perfected humanity—despite the flattery implied in his picture—was not to be found in the gay court life of Florence.

At the last he seems to have found peace by a deliberate renunciation of the world. He came under the influence of Savonarola, the great visionary, and great statesman, who so nearly succeeded in founding a kingdom of righteousness on the earth. Botticelli accepted the guidance of Savonarola's master mind, and we can see how in his later work he curbed his hand and eye and painted only in the old allegorical manner of Giotto. Indeed, he receded farther back still, to the style of the Byzantine artists. A good example of this late work is *The Nativity* (No. 1034) already described on page 25. If we compare this with the *Mars and Venus* (No. 915), we shall recognize the two conflicting forces which drove "our Sandro" into the gloomy shadow of unrest. We can understand his hesitations, and there is a subtle link of sympathy between one age of doubt and another.

Filippino is believed to have been the son of Fra Lippo Lippi. He was certainly associated with him in much of his work and afterwards became the pupil of Lippi's pupil, Sandro Botticelli. His work reminds us sometimes of one artist, sometimes of the other. It has also a very great charm of its own. Exhibiting more spiritual insight than the Frate and more calm than Botticelli, Filippino gives us the impression of a man whose heart is at rest; and the faces he paints are extraordinarily lovely. His work is technically excellent; and he too learned

Filippino
Lippi,
1457-1504

from Masaccio's frescoes and has caught something of that great master's assured manner.

Indeed some of the Brancacci Chapel frescoes were finished by Filippino, and it is hard to distinguish between the work of the two artists. The two acknowledged masterpieces of Filippino are *The Vision of S. Bernard* in the Badia, and the beautiful *Altar-piece of San Spirito*; both well-known churches in Florence. An interesting discovery has been made recently of a third fine picture of his, a *Holy Family*. It was formerly at Naples, and is now the property of Mr. E. P. Warren, of Lewes. It is a *tondo* (a round picture), and the figures within it are grouped with admirable skill. The Virgin is very beautiful, and the two lovely children have their arms linked in an embrace. In the words of Mr. Berenson, "Everything is gracious, measured, serene".

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

Filippino deserves a fuller notice, but space permits only a word of recommendation of No. 293, *The Virgin and Child with S. Jerome and S. Dominic*, in the National Gallery, where, despite a quite unusual absence of colour, we have in S. Dominic and the infant Christ two of his characteristic faces. The Child, at his Mother's breast, yet looking outwards towards us, is especially winsome. The kneeling figures of S. Jerome and S. Dominic with his tall white lily flank the central group symmetrically on either side. Behind stretches a typical Italian landscape. The spirit of the picture is devotional, and, like the one described above, everything here is "gracious, measured, and serene". *An Angel Adoring* (No. 927), with hands clasped in prayer and bent head, although only a fragment, may be often seen in reproductions. It is a special favourite with lovers of the Italian Primitives. Filippino hovers on the border-line: almost unconsciously still moved by the feelings of the Primitives; consciously obedient to the new art-impulses of the Renaissance.

Correction.—The three Venus pictures mentioned on pp. 66 and 67 were painted not for Lorenzo the Magnificent but for a cousin of his, by name Lorenzo di Pier Francesco di Medici.

CHAPTER X

LEONARDO DA VINCI AND MICHELANGELO

TO the second half of the fifteenth century belong the two reverberating names of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. "Their sound is gone out into all lands." These men were not only great as painters, they exhibited proofs of such a transcendent order of genius that we may almost affirm that to them nothing was impossible. There is a modern phrase about Cecil Rhodes that he "thought in continents". These giants of the Renaissance must have thought in "worlds"; for their conceptions were so exalted and far-reaching that it is granted to only a few to enter into even the outlying border-regions of their vast imaginings.

In order of time Leonardo da Vinci appeared first. He was Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519 born in 1452 in the castle of Vinci, not far from Florence. The son of a distinguished Florentine gentleman, he was educated by able teachers, and soon proved to be no ordinary child. Vasari tells us that he "confounded his masters by the problems he raised in connection with arithmetic; and his taste for music was early developed". "He also," Vasari adds, "commenced the study of music and resolved to acquire the art of playing the lute, when, being by nature of an exalted imagination and full of the most graceful vivacity, he sang to that instrument most divinely, improvising, at the same time, both the verses and the music."¹ Yet for drawing and modelling his bent was even more decided, and his father placed him in the studio of Andrea del Verrocchio, one of the best Florentine masters of the day. But Leonardo soon excelled his master both in sculp-

¹ From *Leonardo da Vinci*, "Great Artists" Series (p. 4).

Leonardo
goes to
Milan, 1482
or 1483

ture and painting. At about the age of thirty he went to Milan. We do not know the reason which led him to forsake the beautiful city in the Val d'Arno. Lorenzo de' Medici, the great patron of Florentine art, had distinguished him in many ways and given him frequent employment. One biographer states that it was Lorenzo himself who made him the bearer of a lute to Ludovico Sforza, regent of Milan. This suggests that Leonardo, with his versatile gifts, had not yet thrown his full energies into any one direction. We know that he sang "most divinely" to the lute. Perhaps it was for this that Lorenzo chiefly valued him, and there is a strange irony in the thought that so discriminating a patron should have unwittingly banished from his court one of the greatest of Florentine artists.

But Leonardo, possessed with one love only, the love of art, seems to have accepted exile with equanimity. He desired a patron whose wealth would enable him to put into execution some of the great schemes that were seething in his brain, and whether a Medici or a Sforza mattered little to him. A remarkable letter to the regent of Milan states in tabular form the many marvellous things which Leonardo can do. He alludes lightly to painting, in which he says he "can do as much as any other, be he who he may". But he dwells at length on the cannon, the portable bridges, the battering rams and scaling ladders which he can invent for a warlike ruler. Leonardo seems to have had the mind of a Columbus, longing to discover new worlds, and much of his energy was expended on the attempt to perfect mechanical inventions—among others a flying machine—only achieved by our own age comparatively recently.

The Last
Supper

Connected with his stay in Milan is the famous fresco of the *Cenacolo* (*The Last Supper*) in the convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie. This is the best known of all Leonardo's works, and ranks as one of the finest pictures in the world. But the originality of Leonardo and his love of experiment led him astray. Instead of adopting the old medium which had been found so successful in fresco-work, he mixed his colours with oil. His reason was the wish to work slowly, and to retain the power of revision which is impossible in the other medium. He was so



THE LAST SUPPER

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Wall painting in the convent of S. Maria delle Grazie Milan

fastidious and conscientious a worker that he spent at least ten years over this one picture, altering it as his mind saw more fully into the subject, adding touch after touch to give greater emphasis to every leading feature. He created a picture such as none had seen in the world before. Louis XII., an arrogant French king, much given to meddling in the affairs of Milan, "on beholding the picture was greatly struck thereat, and closely contemplating it, he asked those about him if it were not possible to hew out the wall whereon it was painted, being minded to take the picture with him to France".¹ Fortunately for Italy the process of "hewing out" a fresco from its wall was not then understood, and Milan kept its masterpiece. But only for a brief number of years, as Leonardo's colours, mixed with oil, could not resist the action of time, and his *Last Supper* is now a wreck. Many copies however were made of it in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and there is a good one by Marco d'Oggiono in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.

The interest of this picture lies chiefly in the animation and variety which Leonardo has imparted to the twelve apostles gathered at the table. He has imagined a dramatic moment when the solemn grief of that upper chamber must have given place to sudden poignant agitation. "One of you shall betray me," says the Master, and each disciple—indignant, sorrowful, amazed, or perhaps almost stunned—has risen to ask the anxious question: "Lord, is it I?" The twelve are arranged in groups of three. On the left (as we look at it), we see the first group next to Christ containing John, Peter and Judas. Note the knife in Peter's hand, and the furious look on his face as though he meditated immediate revenge on the traitor. Yet Judas, clutching the money-bag, and, in his anxiety, oversetting the salt (an omen of disaster), is sitting actually between the two hands of the vengeful Peter. S. John's quiet grief is exquisitely expressed. Farther left, are S. Bartholomew at the corner, then James the Less, and Andrew, with protesting raised hands. To the right are Thomas, James the Greater, and Philip. The doubting Thomas questions, James, with outspread hands, repudiates the horrible thought; and Philip pleads

6 ¹ From *Leonardo da Vinci*, "Great Artists" Series (p. 27).

his innocence with gentle, half-reproachful affection. To the extreme right are Matthew, Thaddeus and Simon. S. Matthew seems to be pointing at the traitor, and his face, as he turns to his two companions, is specially vigorous and animated. There is furious anger on the face of Thaddeus, and quieter scorn on the face of Simon. It is to Goethe's well-known description that we are chiefly indebted for this reading of the picture. Notice too that Leonardo requires no arbitrary symbols: the standing figure of S. Peter casts a natural shadow upon the traitor; the small open window forms an aureole about the head of Christ. Of this central figure it is not easy to speak. Its condition is deplorable; and we should wrong Leonardo if we accepted this seemingly vacant face as truly representing his conception. But the small faded picture of the *Head of Christ* (a drawing in pastel touched with tempera colour), which tradition attributes to Leonardo, is in every way worthy of him. This picture, now in the Brera Gallery, is believed by some to be the original sketch for the Christ of *The Last Supper* (see p. 14). Leonardo was a seeker after visions that he never saw, his passion for beauty was never satisfied; yet his imagination persisted in its pursuit of that perfect ideal which this head of Christ does tentatively suggest. He believed in painting as the most directly impressive of all the arts. Here are his own strong words:—

"Thirst shall parch thy tongue, and thy body shall waste through lack of sleep and sustenance, ere thou canst describe in words that which painting instantly sets forth before the eye."

In this face with the drooping eyelids, where Leonardo has striven to show the divine sorrow of the betrayed Son of man, we are conscious of a mystery too deep for human sounding. He has "set instantly before our eyes" a spiritual truth which evades articulate speech.

After the final defeat of Ludovico Sforza by the French in 1500, Leonardo wandered for a time through many of the towns of Northern Italy. In 1515 he entered the service of Francis I., the new King of France, and went to live in that country. It was there that he died at Amboise in 1519, and his body lies in an obscure grave in the Church of San Floren-

Head of
Christ

Close of
Leonardo's
life

His death,
1519

tino in that town. To those who desire to know him better we recommend Merejkowski's novel, *The Forerunner*.

Leonardo's extraordinary personality was not only a vitalizing force in his own age, but it continues to stimulate the artistic powers of all who come under his influence. He founded in Milan an academy for the study of art, in which many young painters were trained. He wrote also for his pupils a most valuable treatise on the art of painting,—the *Trattato della Pittura*. In this he deals with nearly every practical problem which confronts the painter either of figures or of landscape. In both departments he urges on the student the necessity of a careful observation of nature as the only effectual school of training for the eye. But Leonardo gave his chief attention to the human form. He studied anatomy so closely that he knew the function of nearly every muscle in the body, and could depict correctly the way in which its workings would appear to the eye. Nothing escaped his intense scrutinizing gaze, and he has left many precious sketches of the various parts of the human body represented in a multitude of attitudes.

Like every great genius conscious of power he was attracted by difficulty; he especially seemed to love those fleeting effects which only the most alert mind can seize at all. The ripple on the surface of wind-troubled water, the subtle smile on a woman's lips, these held for him an inexhaustible charm. Leonardo not only seizes these transient effects, he has the power of looking through them at something permanent that lies beneath. He grips the essential in each object at which he looks, and so (as Hamlet would express it) "he plucks the heart out of its mystery". Therefore Leonardo can so paint old age that it compels our veneration; the innocence of girlhood so as to stir feelings of chivalry; and the exquisite witchery of childhood with a power that touches the heart. It has been said of his work: "Nothing that he touched but he turned into a thing of eternal beauty".

We have no just ground of complaint because these "things of beauty" which he has left to us are few. Paris has secured

Trattato
della
Pittura

His love
for the
intangible

Famous
easel
pictures

Mona Lisa
or La
Giaconda

the greater number of them, doubtless because of Leonardo's connection with Francis I. Of the six in the Louvre the two most interesting are the *Mona Lisa* and the *Vierge aux Rochers* (Virgin of the Rocks). Mona Lisa was the wife of one Zanobi del Giacondo, and so, from her husband's name, she is sometimes called La Giaconda, and in French "la belle Joconde". Leonardo spent four years in painting this face which now for centuries has haunted and fascinated those who look upon it. Vasari makes this comment: "There is so pleasing an expression, and a smile so sweet, that while looking at it one thinks it rather divine than human . . . life itself could exhibit no other appearance". But Lomazzo, a pupil of Leonardo's, writes of this picture with a truer appreciation. He says that whoever has seen it must allow that art transcends nature,— "art having a far higher and more subtle method of fettering the interest of the thoughtful".

La
Vierge aux
Rochers

In this picture the Virgin sits beside a river and behind is a wild landscape of broken rocks from which flowers are springing. The little S. John with clasped hands kneels on her right and adores the infant Christ who is seated in the foreground to her left. She lays one hand affectionately on the shoulder of S. John, and the other is extended with a gesture of blessing above the head of Christ. A guardian angel kneels beside him and supports him. The Child is extraordinarily beautiful, and into all the faces Leonardo has put great depth of expression.

The Virgin
of the
Rocks

We are fortunate enough to possess a genuine Leonardo in our National Gallery (No. 1093). This too is known by the name of *The Virgin of the Rocks*, and bears a striking resemblance to the picture in the Louvre. Its history is well authenticated, and Lomazzo (mentioned above) has left a written description of one of Leonardo's Madonnas, which most critics agree must be this very picture.

Lomazzo describes it as "a panel picture in which S. John the Baptist is shown kneeling with folded hands before the Saviour, . . . while the Madonna in wonder regards him, her countenance full of mingled joy and expectancy—while with face of radiant beauty the Seraph seems wrapt in the

contemplation of that boundless bliss which shall go forth to mankind as the outcome of the mystery on which he now looks, the features of the infant Christ are distinctly stamped with an expression of God-like wisdom. The Virgin kneels, holding S. John with her right hand, while she stretches the left forward, which is thus seen fore-shortened. The angel holds the Holy Infant by the left hand, who, sitting upright, gazes earnestly at S. John while bestowing blessing upon him." ¹

There is one important point of difference between the two pictures. In the Louvre version the angel has an outstretched hand and by pointing at the little S. John seems to be teaching us "how to pray". We should notice in our picture that the haloes and the cross in the arms of S. John are additions made by some officious restorer. The dull, almost ashy hue of some of the flesh tints (*e.g.* the Virgin's right hand) are doubtless due to some experiment of Leonardo's which has resulted in the disappearance of the colours he used. But the conception of the picture, the drawing, the use of light and shade, in a word the whole appeal to our tactile imagination, remains unimpaired by the action of time. Notice in both children the dimples on the hands and at the elbow; the beauty and "fatness" of the crossed feet of the little Christ. Notice too the essential significance of each of the figures; protecting motherhood in the Virgin, childhood's easy withdrawal into heavenly places in S. John, something "God-like" in the smile of the divine Child.

I, for one, would not exchange our picture for the other. The didactic action of the angel pointing towards S. John robs it of the sense of remoteness and mystery stirred in us by the sight of this drama in heaven. We feel that this is the greater triumph of imaginative art.

Michelangelo Buonarroto holds a place among the greatest men that have ever lived. We feel a thrill, almost of awe, in the presence of one in whose character were combined so many of the noblest qualities of human nature. He was too great for our ordinary world; and, as he moved about among the

Michel-
angelo
Buonarroti

¹ From *Leonardo da Vinci*, "Great Artists" Series (p. 99).

smaller men of his day with their narrow interests, their timid vacillations, and their mean and spiteful intrigues, his whole soul became embittered by a sense of isolation, and his life reads like a tragedy. Because of his singular gifts he has been called the "man of four souls": he was painter, sculptor, architect, and poet; and great in each of these provinces of art. He combined in his nature the rock-like stability of moral and intellectual strength with the tenderness of a woman. His devotion to art was intense, but, unlike Leonardo, he loved his country with an equal fervour. He could lay aside his art when the time came to play the patriot, and he did not shrink from fighting in defence of Florentine liberties. He could labour at his manual arts with an industry that was furious, but he could rest too, and give his thoughts to poetry. Visited as he was by inspirations of the most violently disturbing kind, he never lost his moral balance: the duties of an honest citizen were not neglected, nor the pledged engagements of an honest workman, because genius happened to intoxicate his brain. Yet he lived in antagonism to the world, because it could not understand him, nor his lofty ideals; and perhaps no more solitary soul has ever traversed the stage of life.

Michelangelo, the son of a poor but proud Florentine gentleman, was born in 1475 at Caprese, where his father was holding a temporary official post. The early signs of his natural bent were disapproved of by his father, who thought an artist's occupation derogatory for a Buonarroti. But opposition was vain, the boy's talent was so unmistakable, and at the age of thirteen he entered the *bottega* of Ghirlandaio. Part of his training consisted in copying the wonderful frescoes by Masaccio in the Carmine church. It was here that a fellow-student, jealous of the superiority of Michelangelo, quarrelled with and struck him, leaving him with the broken nose which gives such a rugged outline to his face. Though trained under Ghirlandaio in painting, he showed a decided preference for sculpture. Among other influences which moulded the genius of Michelangelo we may mention the paintings of Luca Signorelli (1441-1523), a powerful draughtsman and conscientious student

Born at
Caprese,
1475

of the human form. He had been trained under Piero della Francesca (1416-1492), whose work, though quaint and archaic, is full of vigour; and from whom a great forward impetus was communicated to the schools both of Florence and Umbria.

On hearing of the promising youth in Ghirlandaio's studio, Lorenzo de' Medici invited Michelangelo to work in the new schools of sculpture in the gardens of his palace. Here the boy had good masters and could study both Greek and Roman models. He had the advantage too of hearing all the artistic and philosophic talk of the clever men assembled at Lorenzo's court. He made rapid progress, and many stories are told of his early successes. His earnings were devoted to the relief of his father's poverty, while Michelangelo himself practised the severest economy and self-denial.

In 1492 he lost his patron, Lorenzo de' Medici, to whom he was warmly attached. His constant nature kept him loyal to the feeble Piero who succeeded to power, and to the end of life Michelangelo recognized the debt he owed to the house of Medici.

As his fame grew he was commissioned to paint a large fresco for the new Council Hall in Florence. Leonardo da Vinci was engaged to paint one wall, Michelangelo the other. Both artists prepared their *cartoons*, the necessary designs in colour from which the fresco was afterwards to be painted. Leonardo did begin his fresco work, but left it unfinished; Michelangelo did not even begin his. Moreover both the cartoons have perished. But copies were soon made by other artists, and these have survived. Both designs are regarded as masterpieces in composition and drawing. Leonardo's was a pure battle-piece, showing men and horses in violent action, and is known as *The Battle of the Standard*; Michelangelo's represented some Pisan soldiers bathing when the news reaches them of the approach of the enemy. So here again there is scope for the exhibition of life and movement. This is known as the *Pisa cartoon*.

The whole trend of Florentine art had been in the direction of figure painting; and Giotto, Masaccio and Botticelli had

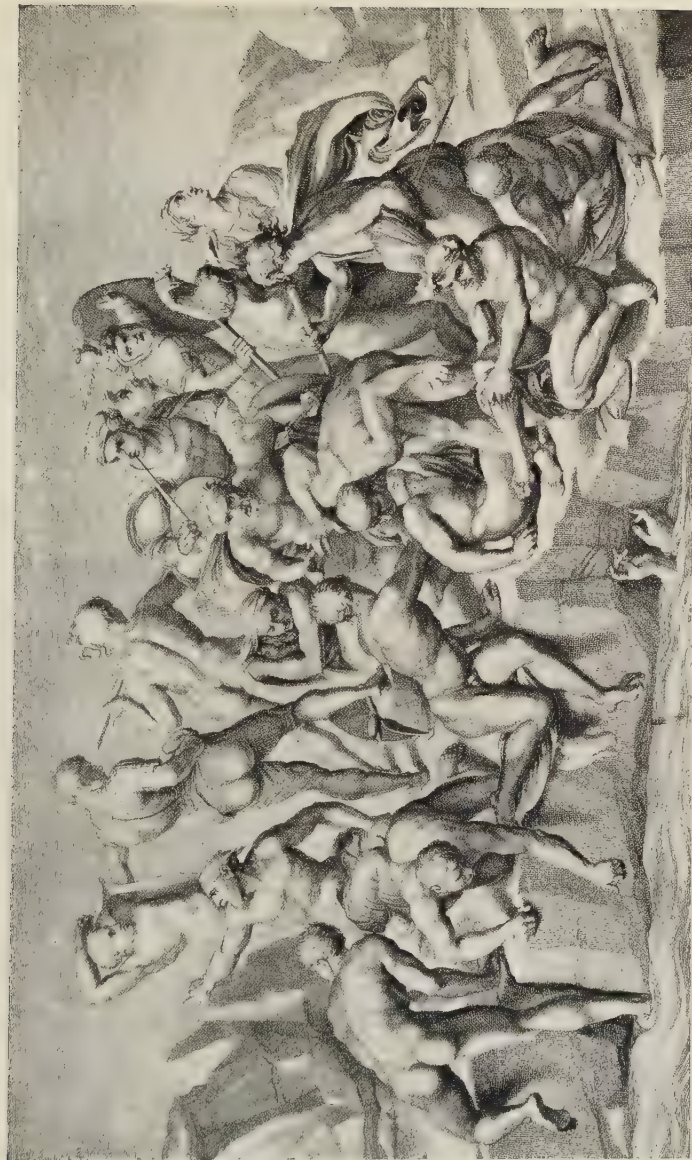
progressively discovered how to give roundness and motion. Leonardo had mastered every problem of anatomy, so that his figures are completely alive. But in Michelangelo this instinctive desire to satisfy the tactile imagination reached its conscious fulfilment. He felt the beauty of the human form in every one of its motions; he felt that these motions were hindered and hidden by drapery, and he determined boldly to represent the nude. We must "see the muscles," as Mr. Berenson says, to gain the full shock of delight in strength, swiftness, and grace, which is conveyed by the sight of a vigorous human form. The nude, he adds, is "the most directly life-confirming and life-enhancing object in the human world". Michelangelo knew this, and it is in the sculpture of nude figures that he has achieved his greatest triumphs.

But in the cartoon of *The Bathers*, where the men, in various attitudes of haste, are scrambling out of the water and flinging on their clothes, he was able to show his mastery over the nude in painting. Had he executed the fresco it would probably have been his best. Our illustration shows the vigour and accuracy of drawing which mark all Michelangelo's work.

In 1504 Michelangelo went to Rome, and was set to work on a gigantic monument for the tomb of Pope Julius II. A magnificent design was sketched out: on the four faces of the oblong tomb were to be groups of standing figures, and above them, lifted high by pillars which supported a canopy over the Pope's recumbent form, were to be eight large sitting figures, keeping guard as it were over the sleeper below. In all there were to be forty marble statues in the completed work, a task for a life-time even for such a craftsman as Michelangelo. The Pope could not conceal his gratified admiration of so appropriate a tribute to his greatness; he had no scruples about the cost, and only urged forward its execution. Michelangelo, who loved to think out his great subjects in solitude, had a workshop erected near S. Peter's, where with his own hand he chiselled the marble. A French writer¹ thus describes his method of work: "I have seen Michelangelo at the age of sixty . . . make more chips of marble fly apart in a quarter of

Work at
Rome,
1504

¹ Blaise de Vigenère.



THE CARTOON OF PISA (THE BATHERS)

MICHELANGELO

an hour than three of the strongest young sculptors would do in an hour—a thing almost incredible to him who has not seen it. He went to work with such impetuosity and fury of manner that I feared almost every moment to see the block split in pieces. It would seem as if, inflamed by the great idea which inspired him, this great man attacked with a species of fury the marble in which his statue lay concealed.”¹ When at work Michelangelo gave orders that none should disturb him, but Pope Julius disregarded the order. He had a covered bridge made between the Vatican and the workshop so that he could look in and criticize when he would.

He was fiery and determined like Michelangelo himself, and at last a quarrel broke out between the two which delayed for a time the progress of the monument.

When at last a reconciliation was effected Michelangelo was again interrupted, but this time by the Pope himself. He had heard it was unlucky for a man to build his own sepulchre, and now gave his attention to the rebuilding of the great Church of S. Peter's. A Florentine architect was engaged to superintend this work—Bramante—who, actuated by jealous dislike of Michelangelo, proposed that he should paint the ceiling of the Sistine chapel. Now as Michelangelo, so far as we know, had painted nothing since his cartoon of *The Bathers*, it seemed probable that he might fail in so difficult a task. He distrusted himself, and begged the Pope to employ Raphael, urging that he was no expert himself in the art of fresco-painting. But Julius insisted, and Michelangelo, the undaunted genius, began the work. On a high scaffolding, gazing upward and painting above him, he laboured at his task from day-break till late at night; sometimes sleeping, without taking off his clothes, on the narrow platform where he worked. Pope Julius, old and infirm, contrived to climb up to him, to look entranced at the wonderful figures which his brush was calling into life. He had painted on the ceiling a long series of scenes, beginning with the creation of man, which represent what we may consider as a vision of human life. He represents in it the

Frescoes on
the ceiling
of the
Sistine
Chapel,
1507-1512

¹ From Mrs. Jameson's *Early Italian Painters* (p. 203).

grandeur of man's possibilities, and the tragedy of his fall. The whole work is full of sublime beauty, though its prevailing note is sadness. It was completed after four years of strenuous labour. These frescoes of the Sistine vault are the masterpiece of Michelangelo as a painter. Mr. Berenson speaks of the invigorating effect produced on those who see these life-like forms in which Michelangelo has "realized a glorious and possible humanity". "If you wish," he says, "to realize your conception of a great soul in a great body, go to the Sistine chapel."

Death of
Julius, 1513

On the death of Julius in 1513 his successor, Leo X., had no mind to carry out the huge and costly monument that had been designed. A shrunk, impoverished tomb was at last finished on which the first gigantic figure sculptured by Michelangelo (his famous *Moses*) looks now somewhat out of place. His own wish was to be faithful to his dead master, but the will of other Popes prevailed, and in the end it was by other artists that the tomb of Julius was completed. Moreover it was banished from the great S. Peter's to a small suburban church, San Pietro in Vincoli.

The Medici
expelled
from
Florence,
1529

Leo X. and his successor belonged to the powerful house of Medici, and they obliged Michelangelo to leave Rome, and devote his great artistic gifts to the adornment of the family church of San Lorenzo in Florence. But in 1529 came a crisis in the history of Florence, and in the life of Michelangelo. The Florentines, who had long suffered under the tyranny of the house of Medici, and had more than once recovered a partial independence, now resolved to make one final effort for freedom. Michelangelo was forced to make his choice between allegiance to the family of his benefactor, and love for Florence. He sacrificed sentiment to what he recognized as a higher duty, and employed his marvellous powers in the construction of fortifications to defend Florence from the approaching papal army. In every preparation for resistance Michelangelo took a leading part, and his sympathy and contagious energy strengthened the courage of the patriots. During the months of anxious waiting before the siege began he rarely left the ramparts, except, as Vasari tells us, "to work *stealthily* at the San Lorenzo statues". These few words reveal to us the con-

Statues in
San
Lorenzo

flict in the soul of this strong and honourable man, who was striving at the same time to be true to the cause of freedom and to the claims of gratitude. At last the siege began; but disunion within and treachery led to the triumph of the Pope and the return of the Medici. It was only because he had need of him that the Pope pardoned Michelangelo and spared his life. So once again he was set to his task on the San Lorenzo statues, and he worked into these some of the despair and grief that were eating at his heart. About one of these statues—*Night*—a friend wrote some lines declaring that she only slept, and a word would awaken her and she would speak. But Michelangelo replied:—

“Grateful is sleep, and still more sweet, while woe
And shame endure, 'tis to be stone like me;
And highest fortune nor to feel nor see;
Therefore awake me not; speak low, speak low.”

These statues of the San Lorenzo Sacristy are regarded by many as his masterpiece in the art of sculpture.

He was commissioned later to paint in the Sistine chapel an immense fresco of *The Last Judgment*. On this stupendous work he was engaged for eight years. It is very terrible; it shows Christ as a furious avenger driving the wicked into hell. All the bitterness of a mind that had long brooded on the injustice, cowardice, cruelty, and avarice of men seems to be poured into the writhing figures of the doomed. The generous impulses which had once swelled the heart of the high principled young Buonarroti seem to have been converted into gall. We know that his family for whom he had toiled and pinched had repaid his sacrifices with ingratitude; one patron after another had thwarted the promptings of his genius; now his beloved Florence was again in fetters. We cannot wonder at the fierce despondency which possessed his soul; but many regret that he should have given it this permanent visible life which to the majority of us is so repellent. Yet may not this feeling of repulsion be in itself a mark of the moral timidity of our own less discriminating age? To great minds such as those of Dante and Michelangelo, capable of conceiving a

The Last
Judgment,
1534-1541

"glorious and possible humanity," the degradation produced by sin must appear appalling. Of both of them we might say in Browning's words that—

" they loved well because they hated,
Hated wickedness that hinders loving."¹

It was that righteous hatred of wickedness which Michelangelo has expressed in his *Last Judgment*.

Friendship
with
Vittoria
Colonna,
1538-1547

Yet in his later years a rare consolation came into his life. He formed a friendship with the widowed Marchioness of Pescara, Vittoria Colonna, a beautiful and intellectual woman of thirty-five years of age. His love for her was as pure and exalted as that of Dante for Beatrice; it gave him nine years of happiness, and a memory that smoothed for him the rugged way to death. She died in 1547, and he was permitted, with other friends, to see her after death. "He was mad with grief," writes one who knew him. "When she was dead he imprinted a kiss upon her hand, and bitterly regretted afterwards that he had not ventured to leave the like token upon her brow." Michelangelo lived on for sixteen years, still vigorous, still laboriously active, and showing no outward sign of his great sorrow. "For myself," he writes, "in all my sufferings I have at least this satisfaction, that no one can read in my face the story of my weariness or my longing . . . I go upon my way alone."

His death,
1564

Another blow fell in 1556, when his faithful servant Urbino died, whom he had trusted and loved as a friend for twenty-five years. In 1564 the old man died in Rome; but in defiance of the wish of the Pope to honour him with a tomb in S. Peter's, the friends of Michelangelo contrived to smuggle the body out of the city and to have it buried, as he had always desired, in Florence. In the Franciscan church of Santa Croce, where Giotto painted his frescoes so long before, is the grave of the last and greatest of Florentine artists.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

We have two unfinished pictures (Nos. 790 and 809) in our Gallery which are believed to be at least in part the work of

¹ From *One Word More*.

Michelangelo. They show his strong realization of tactile values and of motion. Notice the figure of S. John in *The Entombment* straining every muscle to sustain the dead Christ ; and the graceful springing motion of the Child (in 809) as he reaches out at the book in his mother's hand. There is little beauty in these pictures, but we are conscious in them of the knowledge and experienced manual skill of a master-painter.

It is this complete knowledge of his subject which has given Criticism to the utterances of Michelangelo the force of decisive authority. of art When he saw Donatello's *S. George*, his one word "March" was remembered and valued as a sufficient verdict on the merit of the statue. When he saw Ghiberti's gates, and called them "fit to be the gates of heaven," there was no further word to be said. We think it may interest the reader to hear how he spoke of painting. It was not easy to draw him into conversation. But his friend Vittoria Colonna sometimes succeeded. One day she asked him : "I want very much to know what you think of Flemish painting, for it seems to me more devout than the Italian".

"Flemish painting, madam," said Michelangelo, "will generally please any devout person more than that of Italy. The latter will never bring a tear to the eye, while the Flemish will make many a one flow ; and this result is due not to the force or merit of the painting, but simply to the sensibility of the devout. It is only to works which are executed in Italy that the name of true painting can be given, and that is why good painting is called Italian. Good painting is itself noble and religious. Nothing elevates a good man's spirit, and carries it farther on towards devotion, than the difficulty of reaching that state of perfection nearest to God which unites us to Him. Now good painting is an imitation of His perfection, the shading of His pencil, a music in fine, a melody ; and it is only a refined intellect which can appreciate the difficulty of this. That is why good painting is so rare, and why so few men can get near to or produce it." ¹

¹ Extract from Francesco d' Ollanda in *Michelangelo*, "Great Artists" Series (p. 75).

CHAPTER XI

THE UMBRIAN SCHOOL AND RAPHAEL

IT was not only at Florence that during the fifteenth century the art of painting had made such progress. In many other parts of Italy the same native instinct for beauty was finding expression in works of art. We have spoken already of Siena, and the famous fourteenth-century painters, Duccio and Simone Memmi. Nearly all their successors fell below them in merit, so that in the fifteenth century our interest is attracted by the greater schools of painting known as the Umbrian, Venetian, and Milanese.

The painters of Umbria were not, like those of Florence, men of universal genius: architects, and sculptors as well as painters. They confined themselves to their one subject, and carried on the old traditions of Siena, by regarding painting as chiefly a vehicle for conveying religious truths. There is therefore a conventional type of picture produced by the Umbrians which differs greatly from the bold, individual style of the later Florentines. The human body was still regarded as a symbol by the Umbrians rather than an object of inexhaustible interest in itself. Therefore they make no attempt to express tactile values. They had another end in view: to "bring the invisible full into play"; not, however, as Giotto did by dramatic actions expressive of inward feelings, but by opening out behind their figures a new heaven and a new earth, which gave a heightened dignity to the human beings in the foreground.

This artistic device is known by the name of "space-composition," and Mr. Berenson considers it to be the distinguishing feature of the Umbrian School. He shows too that,

by presenting to the eye this inalienable relation of man to the universe, a strong religious emotion is stirred in the spectator. We become conscious of our own greatness, and our thoughts are lifted heavenward. This scientific criticism which analyses our feelings and traces them to a quite material source—the introduction of an effect of space into a picture—happens to be in exact accord with Ruskin's more purely literary method of interpretation.

Instead of "space-composition" he speaks of "infinity," and tells us that every great picture will arouse in us this recognition of infinity if it is to afford us complete satisfaction. He bases his assertion on the belief that only in God can the soul find perfect content. "Thou madest us for Thyself," wrote Augustine, the saint and philosopher: "and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." For this reason the divine qualities of infinity, unchangeableness, repose, purity, have for us an indescribable attraction. When by these open backgrounds full of light an artist makes us aware of this divine quality of infinity he cannot fail to convince us of the greatness of his art. The whole passage on "Typical and vital beauty" in the second volume of *Modern Painters* should be read by those who wish to understand the peculiar spiritual "efficacy," as one might call it, of the Umbrian School.

The first noted master of this School was Gentile da Fabriano (1360?-1428); a far more important one was Piero della Francesca¹ (1416-1492); but the greatest before Raphael was Perugino,² of whose work we have four fine examples in our Gallery. The most valuable and characteristic is the altar-piece (a triptych) bearing the title, *The Virgin adoring the Infant Christ* (No. 288). It was painted for the Certosa at Pavia, a magnificent church and convent of the Carthusians which is one of the finest embodiments of the Renaissance love of splendour to be found in Italy. The bloodthirsty and treacherous Gian Galeazzo Visconti who founded it meant to dazzle both contemporaries and posterity by a monument that should silence criticism. He no doubt was also actuated by

Ruskin on
typical and
vital beauty

Perugino,
1446-1524

¹ His *Nativity* in National Gallery (No. 908), ranks as a masterpiece.

² More correctly, but less familiarly, known as Pietro Vannucci.

a wish to divert the divine attention from his many crimes by an offering fitted to appease the wrath even of the King of heaven. The greatest artists in Italy were engaged for the adornment of the Certosa, and this picture once hung above one of the marvellous altars on which trained artificers are said to have spent twenty years of work. This we grant is a digression, but it may serve to emphasize the fact that Perugino was accepted in his day as a master-painter. We see in this picture his merits and his limitations. We notice the exhilarating feature of space-composition in which he excelled; and on the other hand the vague, timorous representation of the figures which is the fault of all Umbrian pictures. The over-refined gentleness of the archangels, Michael and Raphael, gives us no confidence in their power to protect. But there is a great charm in the delicacy of tone and colour which is peculiar to Perugino.

Before speaking of Perugino's famous pupil, Raphael, we should mention that another master had already given a strong bias to his taste. One Timoteo della Vite, a pupil of the great Francia, was at work in Urbino (Raphael's birthplace) towards the end of the fifteenth century. Though himself almost unknown to fame, it had been his privilege to work for five years (1490-1495) in the *bottega* at Bologna of Francesco Raibolini, commonly called Il Francia. This celebrated painter was the founder of the *Bolognese School*, and has left behind him a very large number of fine pictures. The altar-piece in our Gallery, *The Virgin with Infant Christ and S. Anne enthroned* (Nos. 179 and 180), is considered by many as his masterpiece. The particular chapel in Lucca for which it was painted is dedicated to S. Anna, and for this reason she sits enthroned beside the Virgin. The attendant saints—S. Laurence, S. Paul, and S. Benedict—were patron saints of the founder's family. An outbreak of the plague at Lucca in 1510 explains S. Sebastian's presence among them. The beautiful little S. John in front of the throne completes the picture of a Holy Family. The lunette (No. 180) formed part of the original altar-piece. Nearly all agree that this *Pietà*¹ is the most completely beautiful

Il Francia,
1450-1517

¹ It is now restored to its place above the larger picture and has become almost invisible. Archaic accuracy has robbed the public of one of its best-loved treasures.

piece of work ever executed by Francia. In purity of line and colour, and profound pathos of expression, it is unrivalled. All who know our Gallery love it, and we regret being obliged to pass over in so cursory a fashion the name of this attractive artist. But in studying Raphael, into whose genius all the artistic forces of his day were absorbed, it is interesting to remember that Francia was one of the many foster-fathers of his growing mind. Timoteo della Vite, modest and unoriginal, acted as the passive vehicle through which the spirit of Francia was poured into the youthful Raphael. The old story of a friendship between these two in later life—so fascinating a possibility to dwell upon—is now discredited.

There is no name in the history of painting more beloved than that of Raphael. His character and work are in every way a contrast to those of Leonardo and Michelangelo. He cannot have known the insatiable intellectual curiosity which consumed Leonardo, nor the hungering desire for the sight of moral and physical beauty which bore fruit in the statuary and the virile figure-painting of Michelangelo. Raphael was happy in the world as he found it. Like Charles Lamb he was "in love with this green earth," and there is an assurance of sanity and peace in all his work which draws us again and again to his pictures.

Raphael Santi was born at Urbino, an important town in the Apennines, and was the son of Giovanni Santi, an Umbrian painter of some merit. The child grew up in a home atmosphere of good art-traditions, while on the open hillside he could feast his eyes on the wonders of nature. He must have known how to handle a brush at the age when children now begin to read. He was also taken sometimes with his father to the palace of the Duke of Urbino, a cultured patron of art who owned a fine collection of pictures by artists of many different schools and countries. Here when the elder Sanzio was engaged in receiving orders about some bit of work to be done for the duke, we can fancy the boy closely studying the pictures, and we may trace his love of delicate detail and finish to the influence of Flemish pictures which he must have seen as a child.

Left early an orphan he became a pupil in the studio of Perugino, the leading painter at that time in Umbria. The exact date is not known, but it cannot have been later than 1499, as

Raphael
Santi

Raphael
born at
Urbino,
1483

Enters
studio of
Perugino
1495 or
1499

The
Sposalizio
at Milan,
1504

in 1500 he was producing independent work. In those early years his style closely resembles that of Perugino, but there is more precise clearness of line than appears in the pictures of his master. To this first period—called *The Peruginesque*—belongs the famous *Sposalizio* in the Brera Gallery at Milan (p. 24), and the miniature picture of *The Knight's Dream* in our Gallery (No. 213). Duty, sombrely clad, holds a book and sword in her hand and calls to a life of study and brave endeavour; Pleasure offers to lead the young knight along a path strewn with flowers. We know from his after-career with what steadfastness of purpose Raphael himself obeyed the call of Duty.

The second
or Floren-
tine period,
1505-1508

In 1504 Raphael left Perugia for Florence, and new power at once shows itself in his pictures. His mind was essentially receptive, and he responded quickly to any new artistic influence. Now for the first time he had the opportunity of studying fine figure-painting. He went to the Carmine church and learned great lessons from the frescoes of Masaccio. It was in 1504 that Leonardo began his sketches for *The Battle of the Standard*, and soon afterwards his rival Michelangelo was at work on his *Pisan Soldiers Bathing*. The young Raphael could feel the power of these masterly works. He did not attempt to copy them, as did so many weaker artists in their despair in presence of such soaring superiority. But he felt inspired to look at the human body itself with a truer perception of its beauty. It was during these transition years when Raphael mixed the sweetness of Perugino with the strength of Michelangelo that he produced some of his most irresistibly lovely work.

The
Madonna
del Gran
Duca, 1505

The *Madonna del Gran Duca* (Madonna of the Grand Duke) was so dear to its possessor the Grand Duke of Tuscany that he is said to have carried it with him on his many campaigns; and, when the ducal tent was pitched at night, the favourite picture was put on an easel near his bed that he might enjoy its beauty.

Madonna
del Prato

A little later Raphael painted the *Madonna del Prato* (or Madonna of the Meadow), which is one of the treasures of the picture gallery at Vienna.



MADONNA DEL GRAN DUCA

RAPHAEL

Des. 101



LA BELLE JARDINIÈRE

RAPHAEL

Des. 102

In the same year probably he painted the *Madonna del Cardellino* (of the goldfinch), so called because of the bird which the little S. John is presenting to the child-Christ. This picture is in the Uffizi. In 1507 he painted what is considered the finest work of this period, his *Belle Jardinière* (literally "the beautiful gardener"). It is thus described by Mr. Berenson, contrasting it first with the simpler treatment of the *Gran Duca* :—

Madonna
del Cardel-
lino

La Belle
Jardinière,
1507

"But great as is the pleasure in a simple group perfectly filling a mere panel, it is far greater when a group dominates a landscape. Raphael tried several times to obtain this effect—as in the *Madonna del Cardellino*, and the *Madonna del Prato*, but he attained to supreme success once only—in the *Belle Jardinière*. Here you have the full negation of the 'plein-air' treatment of the figure. The *Madonna* is under a domed sky, and she fills it completely, as subtly as in the *Gran duca* panel, but here it is the whole out-of-doors, the universe, and a human being supereminent over it. What a scale is suggested! Surely the spiritual relation between man and his environment is here given in the only way that man . . . will ever feel it. And not what man knows but what man feels concerns art."¹

The fame of the young Raphael (barely twenty-five years of age) soon spread beyond Florence. Pope Julius II. invited him to Rome to take part in his schemes for the decoration of the Vatican. The same Raphael who had painted *The Knight's Dream* with the minute attention to detail of the Flemish School, now displayed in fresco the large freedom and vigour of treatment which we regard as essentially the prerogative of Florentine art. He had grown in artistic perception and manual skill to a degree that seems hardly credible. He was set to paint some of the Halls in the Vatican, and his frescoes are a triumph both of composition and execution.

The third
or Roman
period,
1508-1520

We are as much impressed by the fundamental brain-work which conceived them as by the convincing truth and beauty

Frescoes of
the Vatican

¹*The Central Italian Painters of the Renaissance*, by B. Berenson (p. 127).

of the finished pictures. In the two principal Halls decorated by Raphael he expresses in forcible imaginative language first the aspirations of man towards God ; and secondly the manifestations of God towards man. In the "Hall of the papal signatures" he shows pictures of the four great processes, as we may call them, of mental activity by which man strives to penetrate the secrets of God : Theology, Poetry, Philosophy, and Jurisprudence.

In the Hall of Heliodorus he shows us four pictures of miraculous answers to prayer. It is lack of space alone which forbids our dilating, as we fain would, on the depth of thought as well as the pictorial skill displayed in these marvellous frescoes.

During this Roman period Raphael painted some of his most famous Madonnas. One is the much-loved round picture of Madonna and Child with S. John, in which the Child leans his head against his mother's, and hides his hands in a nestling attitude under the shawl which covers her breast. This is called the *Madonna della Sedia* (or "of the chair") from the chair in which she is sitting, and is now in the Pitti.

In 1590 Raphael painted his *Madonna di San Sisto* (our frontispiece), which is generally acknowledged as his masterpiece. As is so often the case with a genius, he puts his best work into a private commission. After long restriction to the frescoes, an appointed task set by papal command, no doubt the rebound of relief when called to paint a simple Madonna was very great. He was asked to paint it for a Benedictine convent, and to introduce S. Sixtus and S. Barbara, the patron saints of the Order. Hence its name "di San Sisto," which it retains, though now in Dresden. The composition of this picture is sublimely simple. The Virgin and Child are represented in heaven with legions of cherub heads faintly appearing behind them ; S. Barbara and S. Sixtus placed symmetrically below, and the two charming upward-gazing cherubs serve to direct our thoughts towards the central group. Here the Mother and Child are one with the infinite heaven which seems to open behind them. Both faces are charged

The
Madonna
della Sedia,
1516

Madonna
di San
Sisto

with a spiritual force that has penetrated the hearts of thousands of men and women. No other Madonna reveals as this one does her deliberate and free participation in the suffering which was to redeem the world: no other Holy Child proclaims so resolutely that he has "seen of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied".

Raphael's last picture was *The Transfiguration*, in which the subject is treated with the same fervour of imaginative insight as the Madonna di San Sisto. It was never finished. He had compressed into a few years more work than most artists achieve in a long lifetime. He expended his mental energy with unstinting zeal; he spared himself no physical toil that would give an added artistic value to his work. Yet the unflagging buoyancy of youth sustained him through year after arduous year. He had reached the summit of fame, and from every country came requests for a picture from the "divine Raphael". He was beloved by the faithful Margharita (his wife in all but name), by the worldly-minded Pope Leo X., even by the painters who despairingly envied the gifts with which he was endowed. When, after a slight chill, he was struck down by fever, all Rome was distraught at the news. After ten days, on Good Friday, 1520, his own thirty-seventh birthday, he passed quietly away. On hearing of his death, the Pope broke into irrepressible tears. Mourning and despair were universal. The body of Raphael lay for several days in state, his last picture hanging above the bed. When the hearse was carried in solemn procession to the Pantheon for burial, the picture was carried like a banner before it; and crowds followed, to show honour to the dead. Ben Jonson's lines occur to the memory in which he contrasts the long-lived oak with the quickly fading, yet beautiful lily:—

"In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be."

Unfortunately we have no masterpiece that wholly expresses the charm of Raphael's best manner. But the *Ansidei Madonna* (No. 1171) is a really fine example of his early Florentine period, and *The Knight's Dream* is a special treasure.

The Transfiguration,
1520

His death,
1520

Pictures
in
National
Gallery

The
Ansidei
Madonna

The *Ansidei* shows a moment of transition in the work of Raphael. It is an altar-piece painted for a church in Perugia, therefore necessarily conforming to the conventions of the Umbrian School. But it was painted in Florence under the influence of a sturdier school. The Virgin and Child are still mere symbols, seated apart, as objects of worship. But in the background Raphael shows his careful choice of the loveliest features of landscape. In the figures of S. John and S. Nicholas we see a growing virility and force of expression. Despite the defective drawing—rather obtrusive in the right leg of the Baptist—we recognize that this painter is on the road to greatness (see p. 32).

The *Portrait of Julius II.* (No. 27) is thought to be a copy only, by an unknown hand, of Raphael's original portrait in the Uffizi at Florence. We cannot fail to be interested in this life-like representation of the rough but kindly-hearted patron of Michelangelo and Raphael and so many famous Italian artists.

The *Cartoons* of Raphael, now at South Kensington, are well known. Designed originally for some tapestry worked in Flanders for the Sistine Chapel, their value was first recognized by Rubens; and on his advice they were purchased by Charles I.

We should remember that Raphael is reckoned as a Florentine, despite his early training in Umbrian traditions. We may therefore briefly mention here two favourite Florentine painters whose names are frequently associated with his.

Fra Barto-
lommeo,
1475-1517

Fra Bartolommeo (1475-1517) was a painter who had great natural gifts, and had learned under Leonardo da Vinci to cultivate them by the best methods. Dominated by the spiritual influence of Savonarola, he in 1500 joined the Order of the Dominicans and entered their famous convent of San Marco. A certain diminution of artistic power seems to have followed this decision, but he still continued to paint and has left behind him many valuable works. He was a personal friend of Raphael's, and at first exercised a strong influence over the younger man. Those early beautiful Madonnas of the Florentine period owe much to the inspiring counsels and the example of Fra Bartolommeo. Later the relations between the two

were changed, and it was the Frate who learned from Raphael. Many fine pictures have come down to us from Fra Bartolommeo; one of the finest being a *Presentation of Christ in the Temple*, now at Vienna.

Almost contemporary in age with Raphael, Andrea del Sarto Andrea del Sarto, 1486-1531 is sometimes regarded as his rival. He too owed much to the influence of Fra Bartolommeo, and in all his pictures we feel the subtle affinity of ideals which links him with Raphael. Andrea excelled in fresco, and there is much of this beautiful work still to be seen in Florence and the neighbouring towns. So swift and sure was his touch that he earned the name of the "faultless painter". He is better known to the general public by his oil paintings, and there are few galleries which have not some example of his work. Our own is not quite fortunate; although the portrait (No. 690)—at one time thought to be of himself—is certainly full of interest. He had in him great possibilities, but they were never fulfilled. There is a note of languor in most of his work which prevents it from reaching greatness. Some attribute this to the overpowering genius of Michelangelo. In presence of his mighty imaginings we can understand that other artists grew timid. Another explanation is the story of an uncongenial marriage. He loved his wife, but she was faithless to him; and so a blight fell on his spirit, and all enthusiasm was extinguished. Browning's poem is, in its way, one of the best criticisms we have of the art of Andrea del Sarto. He represents him as speaking to his very beautiful, but woodenly stupid wife:—

"You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak;
And that cartoon, the second from the door,
—It is the thing, Love! so such things should be:

.
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of all their lives,
—Dream? strive to do, and agonise to do,
And fail in doing . . .

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver grey,
Placid and perfect with my art; the worse!"

(Then he comments on the eager spirit of Raphael, still however technically prone to error.)

“That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right—that a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
And all the play, the insight and the stretch—
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Raphael, I and you—”

This is ever the complaint of the weaklings; they forget the maxim of Marcus Aurelius, “A man must stand erect, not be kept erect by others”. So Andrea del Sarto remains among the mediocrities, while the strong-souled Raphael ascends to the Mount of Transfiguration.

CHAPTER XII

THE EARLY VENETIAN SCHOOL

WHEN we leave Florence for Venice we come to a new world, and may expect to find pictures of a different kind. The city of Venice, built on a group of islands at the north of the Adriatic, appears to be floating magically upon the sea. Her people were mariners and traders; and their commerce brought them into such close relations with Eastern lands that the spirit of Oriental luxuriance seems to have entered into their works of art. In Venice the great merchants lived in princely splendour, and they had so regulated their government that the mass of the people were kept in tutelage like children, and knew nothing about those responsibilities of citizenship which had given to the Florentines so commanding a type of character.

In name a republic, and denying the over-lordship both of The Pope and Emperor, the State of Venice consisted really of a Venetian Republic close oligarchy. The president, bearing the title of Doge, was in fact the servant of the Council of Ten with whom rested supreme power. The members of the Senate were drawn only from among the wealthy magnates whose palaces of richly carved and decorated marble still flank the waters of the Grand Canal. Yet the people were content. Their city ruled over subject territories upon the mainland, and held rank as a sovereign State in Europe. They were proud of its greatness. And their pride was diplomatically fostered by their rulers who, in their exemption from papal interference, were able to provide a sort of State-religion. It consisted chiefly in the observance

of impressive ceremonials connected with the worship of patron saints, and the aid rendered by them to the pious inhabitants of Venice. Splendid pageants were arranged, which naturally afforded pleasure to the eye, and at the same time taught lessons of loyalty to Church and State.

"Wedding
the
Adriatic"

One of the most splendid of the state-ceremonials was the yearly celebration of the marriage between Venice and the sea, known as "Wedding the Adriatic". The Doge, magnificently attired, would pass out from his palace, attended by noble lords and ladies; he would enter the gorgeous barge waiting for him in the lagoon which washes up against the palace steps; accompanied by a whole flotilla of other boats, gaily decorated, he would sail out towards the open sea, and there, flinging a costly ring into the water, he would pronounce the words which united Venice and the Adriatic in the bond of marriage. We can imagine no more striking manner of proclaiming the closeness of the bond between the city and the sea.

Fall of Con-
stantinople,
1453

Immersed in commerce, victorious in many a war, satisfied with the enjoyment of material comfort, it was long before Venice sought expression in pictorial art. Indeed it was only just before her decline that the art of painting arose. When the Turks settled down at Constantinople and closed all access to the East, the carrying trade of Venice received its death-blow; on the discovery of the route to India by the Cape of Good Hope, the whole course of commerce was diverted to the North of Europe, and Bruges, London, Lübeck, and the other towns of the Hanseatic League rose into a new importance.

On the eve of her decline Venice seemed to wake to a full realization of her own greatness. The spirit of the Renaissance—when the human race reached conscious maturity—manifested itself in many different ways: in Florence, for instance, in the pursuit of ideal perfection in every branch of art; while in Germany and Northern Europe it led to the desire for moral reform. But in Venice it displays itself chiefly in a recognition of the magnificence and beauty of this present life, and in a passion for enjoyment.

So in the art of Venice we shall not expect profound thought, or much religious sentiment, or even a careful study of anatomy and perspective which are so essential to good drawing. But colour which delights the senses and fills us with gaiety—a quite unreasoning and impulsive gaiety—that was what the Venetian artist loved, and it is chiefly for the sake of their colour that we love Venetian pictures.

It is hard to assign Andrea Mantegna to any one of the schools of Italian art. But, as he was born near Padua, a town in Venetian territory, and exercised some influence over early Venetian painters, it will not be out of place to speak of him here. According to some stories he began life as a shepherd boy, like Giotto. But his genius for art must have been soon discovered, and he was actually made a member of the Paduan Guild of Painters at the age of ten. His master and patron was Squarcione, a very inferior painter, but one who had formed a kind of museum of ancient works of art which served to train the taste of students. More than a hundred pupils, many of them doing well as painters in after-life, passed through the school of Squarcione, but Mantegna was the most brilliant and the most beloved by his master. Mantegna developed into a really great painter with as much individuality of style as any Florentine. This style was derived, it is true, partly from his admiration for Donatello, a Florentine sculptor, who worked for some years in Padua; and partly from his study of the antique. He was very firm in his allegiance to classic principles of art composition; his figures are always statuesque, and his colours quiet. He was famed during his lifetime for his frescoes, but most of these have perished. His best existing piece of work is a magnificent altar-piece at Verona. Mantegna worked for a short time in Rome for one of the Popes, but the greater part of his life was spent in Mantua, where he was attached to the court of the marquis.

It was there that he painted in tempera a series of nine large consecutive pictures representing the *Triumph of Caesar* which we are fortunate enough to possess. They were bought in 1623 by Charles I., and are now in Hampton

Venetian.
love of
colour

Andrea
Mantegna
1431-1506

Squarcione

Court Palace. They have been injured by restoration and the action of time, but we can still feel the power in them of Mantegna's affinity in spirit with the ancient Greeks. They hang in one of the corridors of communication in the palace, and are so full of interest and beauty that those who wish to understand the greatness of Mantegna should not fail to see them. We have also five pictures by him in our Gallery. *The Virgin and Child Enthroned* (No. 274) will repay careful study; the quiet dignity of the statuesque figures is only felt after a longer inspection than is sometimes granted by visitors to the gallery. In the same room (No. VIII.) we shall be sure to feel the attraction of that delightfully fantastic painter, Carlo Crivelli, to whose two pictures of S. Sebastian we have already alluded (p. 33).

Carlo
Crivelli,
1430?-
1493?

A description of Mantegna's *Death of the Virgin* will be found on p. 28. His reverence for the past tended to narrow his influence, but a special connection with the art of Venice was brought about through his marriage with the daughter of Jacopo Bellini, a Venetian painter.

The
Bellini

Jacopo Bellini had learned his art from Gentile da Fabriano (p. 87), the father of the Umbrian School, when this painter was living for a time in Venice. Jacopo afterwards settled in Padua with his two sons, Gentile and Giovanni, who in the future were to become famous. As learners in their father's studio they became acquainted with the brilliant young pupil of Squarcione, Andrea Mantegna, who before long married their sister. The influence exercised by Mantegna over his two brothers-in-law was considerable and explains the peculiar severity of the earlier work executed by Giovanni. These two brothers, Gentile and Giovanni, are reckoned as the first Venetian painters of note. We ought perhaps also to mention the brothers Vivarini (living between 1440 and 1500), whose influence on early Venetian art was very important.

Gentile
Bellini,
1429-1507

Gentile Bellini excelled in the representation of pageants, and the special value of his pictures lies in their faithful rendering of a long past phase of Venetian life. He was a traveller too; and, when the Sultan requested that an artist might be sent him from Venice, Gentile was sent to Constantinople, where he



CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

GIN TROBUTO

Scuola di S. Rocco, Venice



THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN

ANDREA MANTEGNA

Palazzo Medici

painted the Sultan's portrait. He no doubt studied observingly the new types of face, and the costumes, and the Eastern forms of architecture in the Sultan's capital. He introduces all these features into some of his pictures. In a very fine one (now at Milan) of *S. Mark preaching at Alexandria*, he was able to display his knowledge of Eastern dress and manners. In pictures of Venice he shows us the canals and bridges and the great Piazza—the one spacious piece of dry land in the city—with which all visitors are so well acquainted, and the old S. Mark's. His *Procession of the True Cross in the Piazza* is full of historical interest. It is preserved with many other of his pictures in the Academy at Venice. Gentile was a faithful artist, with a feeling for the beauty of line rare among the Venetians. He owed this to his brother-in-law Mantegna. It was in Gentile's studio that the nine-year-old genius, the boy Titian, began his art training.

But the really great Bellini is Giovanni, the younger brother of Gentile. Trained in his father's studio at Padua he derived his first inspiration as a painter from Mantegna, and seems to have deliberately imitated his severe classic style. But from Gentile da Fabriano, the Umbrian, his father's teacher, he caught some of the religious spirit of that school. Yet in Bellini's early work a certain hardness of treatment prevails which is thought to be due not only to the influence of Mantegna, but also to that of Antonello da Messina (1444-1493), a painter who had visited Flanders and is believed to have been the first to introduce the use of oils into Italy. His style was greatly affected by the work of the van Eycks and of van der Weyden, and through him some of the characteristics of Flemish art seem to have been imparted to the early pictures of Giovanni Bellini. But gradually his own love of the beautiful asserted itself, and his style grew softer, and he put more expression into his faces. Then he adopted the new method of mixing his paints with oil, and began to work with more freedom, and his pictures, as the years went on, became more and more lovely. His best are in Venice, some still hanging in the churches for which they were painted, some collected

Giovanni
Bellini,
1430 (?) -
1516

for exhibition in the Venice Academy. They have a peculiar pathetic charm, which makes us long to know more about the man who painted them. We can see the outward change in style, and we wish to understand the inward development of character which this reveals. It is thought that in early life he was much impressed by the preaching of the famous Dominican friar, S. Bernardino of Siena, who made some stay in Padua. In Bellini's early work there are certainly traces of the ascetic spirit. In later life a strain of sober joy enters into his work: more light and colour are introduced, and more peaceful attitudes. His heart seems to have grown mellow, so that he could reconcile moral earnestness with a bright and joyous outlook on life.

San
Zaccaria
Madonna

Our illustration shows a beautiful example in the Church of San Zaccaria in Venice. It was painted in 1505 when Bellini was eighty, and just one year later than Giorgione's famous Castelfranco Madonna from which the older painter may have caught a fresh breath of inspiration (see p. 104). Professor Roger Fry comments on the lightness of the architecture, and especially the raising of the central group which gives "increased depth to the figures within the picture". He continues: "The figures here move in an ample space; and the large voluminous folds of the drapery, which in the Madonna's robe fall for the first time over the step of the throne, emphasize the reposeful suavity of the composition. All his early intensity of feeling, the regal stateliness of the Madonnas of his middle age, are here fused and mellowed in the glowing atmosphere of the new cinquecento art. . . . It is no doubt more in touch than the Castelfranco Madonna with the older traditions of art; but it is just as rich an expression of an untroubled delight in existence."¹

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

Unfortunately the specimens in our Gallery belong chiefly to his early period, and some who are expecting much may feel repelled by the harsh almost grotesque method of treatment. But the *Madonna and Child* (No. 280) is a very characteristic

¹Giovanni Bellini, by Roger E. Fry (p. 43).

example of Bellini's work, and was probably painted during the middle period of his life. His best-known picture in the Gallery is the only portrait we know of that Bellini ever painted; that of the *Doge Loredano* (No. 189). Kingsley's well-known description of it has been often quoted, and may have led many to look closely into the picture. It has become one of the most popular in the gallery, and deservedly so. The quiet, tolerant outlook on life which comes in old age to those who have confronted its problems with activity and valour has never been better represented than here. We feel that the painter who can put so much into a portrait must have read deep into human nature. Bellini lived to be himself a very old man, and in his studio a brilliant group of young painters were trained. Titian had soon left Gentile for the more gifted Giovanni; and among his fellow-students were Cima da Conegliano, Lorenzo Lotto, Palma Vecchio, Carpaccio, Catena, and the far more celebrated Giorgione. In 1506 Albert Dürer paid a visit to the aged Venetian painter whose fame had spread through Europe. In 1516, universally honoured, still vigorous at nearly ninety years of age, Giovanni Bellini died.

A few words only can be given to some of his famous pupils. About Carpaccio very little is known, but his work is dominated by the spirit of Gentile Bellini rather than that of the younger brother. Carpaccio excels in the painting of pageant scenes into which crowds of figures are skilfully introduced. All his finest work is in Venice. His series of pictures on the story of S. Ursula are charmingly described by Ruskin in his *Fors Clavigera*.¹ They are now arranged in a room by themselves in the Venice Academy, so that we can follow the story without distraction. Carpaccio is the prince of story-tellers. Even Giotto must yield the palm to this inimitable humorist. From our illustration on page 24 some estimate may be formed of his style.

We know even less of Catena, who did not receive much recognition in his own day. His special interest to us lies in the fact that we possess a particularly fine picture by him (No. 234)

¹ See vol. vi., pp. 339-60; vol. vii., pp. 32, 57-8 and 137.

Vittore
Carpacci of
1450 (?) -
1525

Catena.
14— (?)
1531

from which those of us who are confined to England may learn something about the art of Giorgione.

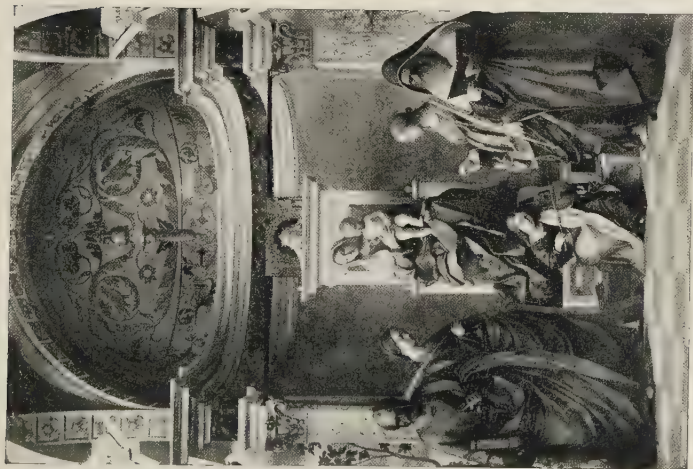
Giorgione,
1477(?)
1510

The mere name of Giorgione ("great George") has a musical power in it which thrills us with a premonition of mystery. "Whom the gods love die young," true of Raphael, was equally true of him. He seems to have gleamed across the shores and islands of the Adriatic like sunshine, leaving the whole world the richer by his passage. Beautiful in outward form, and beautiful in soul, every work from his hand seems to have grown, as a flower grows, into a "thing of beauty". "In tune with the universe" is a fitting phrase for the art of Giorgione. It excites surprise, as natural beauty does, because it is so strangely lovely; at the same time we are convinced that it is true because our hearts have been always expecting it. And yet what do we really know about this rare and delicate genius? Only the barest details: that the date of his death (quite recently discovered) is 1510; that he was born probably at Castelfranco on the Venetian mainland territory, and that he had the reputation of being one of the greatest painters of his day.

Giorgione's
pictures

The Castel-
franco
Madonna

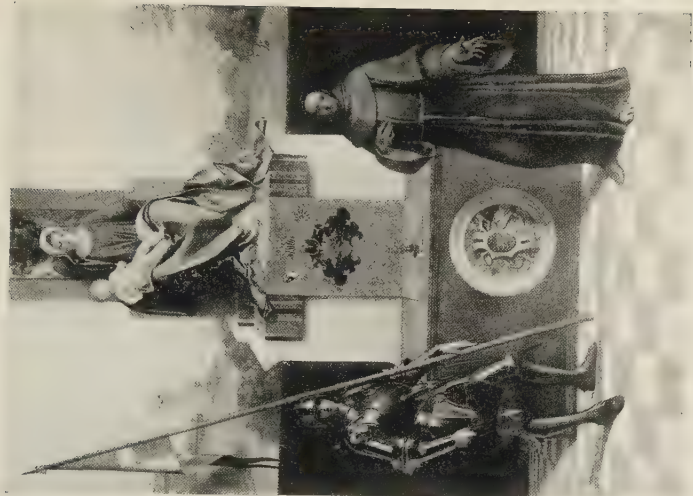
For long it was believed that very few authentic pictures remained as a permanent heritage for the world. Only three have from the first been accepted by all schools of critics as the genuine work of Giorgione. One of these is the altar-piece at Castelfranco given in our illustration, which according to Ruskin is "one of the two most perfect pictures in existence; alone in the world as an imaginative representation of Christianity, with a monk and a soldier on either side". There is an excellent criticism of it in Mr. Herbert Cook's *Giorgione* in the "Great Masters" Series. He says: "There is a reserve, almost a reticence, in the way the subject is presented, which indicates a refined mind. An atmosphere of serenity pervades the scene, which conveys a sense of personal tranquillity and calm. The figures are absorbed in their own thoughts; they stand isolated apart, as though the painter wishes to intensify the mood of dreamy abstraction. Nothing disquieting disturbs the scene, which is one of profound reverie. All this points to



MADONNA ENTHRONED WITH FOUR SAINTS

GIOVANNI BELLINI

Church of S. Zaccaria, Venice



MADONNA WITH SS. FRANCIS AND LIBERALIS

GIORGIONE

Giorgione being a man of moods, as we say ; a lyric poet whose expression is highly charged with personal feeling, who appeals to the imagination rather than the intellect. And so, as we might expect, landscape plays an important part in the composition ; . . . Giorgione uses it as an instrument of expression, blending nature and human nature into happy unison. The effect of the early morning sun rising over the distant sea is of indescribable charm, and invests the scene with a poetic glamour which, as Morelli truly remarks, awakens devotional feelings. To enjoy similar effects we must turn to the central Italian painters, to Perugino and Raphael ; certainly in Venetian art of pre-Giorgionesque times the like cannot be found, and herein Giorgione is an innovator. Bellini, indeed, before him had studied nature and introduced landscape backgrounds into his pictures, but more for picturesqueness of setting than as an integral part of the whole ; they are far less suggestive of the mood appropriate to the moment, less calculated to stir the imagination than to please the eye. Nowhere, in short, in Venetian art up to this date is a lyrical treatment of the conventional altar-piece so fully realized as in the Castelfranco Madonna."¹

The two other undisputed Giorgiones are the so-called *Soldier and Gypsy* at Venice,² and *The Three Philosophers* at Vienna. But to the well-known Italian art critic, Morelli, we are indebted for the discovery of several more. By his careful and scientific methods of proving the authorship of pictures from internal evidence, he has been able to correct many of the false attributions made in the past. He can recognize the handiwork of Giorgione when another name is affixed to the picture, and his conclusions have been accepted by most connoisseurs. But the Giorgione-quest continues : to add one more authentic Giorgione to the still slender list of his works must be a reward which may be very justly coveted. The voices of many claimants of this reward are now agitating the world with their controversies. Those who wish

The Soldier
and Gypsy,
and the
Three
Philos-
ophers

¹ *Giorgione* in the "Great Masters" Series (pp. 8, 9).

² Known also as *Adrastus and Hypsipyle*.

to know more on the subject should read Mr. Herbert Cook's *Giorgione* and Mr. Berenson's *Study and Criticism of Italian Art*; and indeed every recent article or book which treats of the still half-veiled personality of the "Great George".

We have fortunately secured as our second illustration (page 110) a singularly beautiful representation of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, now in Mrs. Gardner's Collection, Boston, U.S.A., and generally accepted as genuine.¹ In it we see the calm, stately type of early tradition raised to that degree of ideal comeliness which Giorgione alone would seem capable of conceiving. Here we are far removed from the visibly suffering Christ of the Flemish School; the cross shrinks into the background as a mere symbol; but on the face is a look of indefatigable and yearning pursuit. We understand the strong words of Francis Thompson in his "Hound of Heaven":—

"Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet."

Giorgione shows us the face; and in those haunting eyes we read the persistence of the divine Pursuer.

Influence of
Giorgione

The widespread and virtually creative influence exercised by Giorgione on Venetian art is questioned by none. Through him Venice learned to know herself, and all the hidden springs were set flowing of romance and passion, and of delight in the exquisite glory of life. Giorgione was the unconscious creator of what we know as the Venetian School.

Kneeling
Knight by
Catena

Our two specimens in the National Gallery (Nos. 269 and 1160) give but a poor idea of this great artist's work, although it is interesting to know that the knight in 269 was probably a study for the Castelfranco altar-piece. But Catena's *Kneeling Knight* (No. 234) is so deeply infused with the spirit of Giorgione that for many years this picture bore his name. It has all the characteristics of his manner. Note the harmonious blending of the many colours: the Virgin's red and blue being thrown into relief by the deeper red of the knight's sleeves,

¹ Formerly in the Palazzo Loschi at Vicenza.

and balanced on the other hand by the rich orange of Joseph's cloak. How peculiarly effective is the spangle of the chain armour over the dull green jerkin worn below it. Did you ever see bluer hills? Yet the trees and the blue-grey mantle of the groom do not suffer from contact with this brilliant background. Here we have a true lyric—a human lyric; for, while the members of the Holy Family are conventionally conceived, the knight's attitude is full of passion, and the dreamy face of the groom looks out from the landscape with the natural inevitable beauty of a flower. The whole picture is *Giorgionesque*: it appeals (as quoted above) “to the imagination rather than to the intellect”; “an atmosphere of serenity pervades the scene”; the landscape is used “as an instrument of expression, blending nature and human nature into happy unison”.

None who stand long before this picture can escape the feeling of “profound reverie” into which Giorgione, the master magician, draws the spirits of those who approach him in his moods of power.

Yet we are speaking of a picture now assigned to another than Giorgione; and would therefore advise our readers, when visiting Hampton Court for the purpose of seeing Mantegna's *Triumph of Julius Caesar*, to make inquiry also for a certain *Shepherd with a Pipe*. They should choose a morning light, on a fine, clear day, and they will see a little picture of such exceeding beauty as to indicate one hand only, that of Giorgione. Controversy still rages round this picture; there are sceptics who think Charles I. was imposed upon when he bought it; but the true believers are on the increase, and we shall do well to join their ranks.

Shepherd
at Hamp-
ton Court

CHAPTER XIII

TITIAN AND THE LATER VENETIANS

Born at
Pieve di
Cadore,
1477 or
'489

WE now reach one of the greatest names in the history of pictorial art, that of Tiziano Vecelli. Descended from an ancient and honourable family, he was born in a remote village among the mountains of Cadore, some fifty miles north of Venice. The roar of the Pieve river must have mingled with the lullaby-songs of his nurse. The impressions made in childhood never faded from his memory. Into the background of his pictures he often introduces the wild scenery of Cadore, quite a new feature in Italian art. Instead of the customary peaceful, undulating plain, with a turreted city perched on each gentle eminence, Titian gives us mountains. And he makes us feel the power and mystery of mountains in a manner which proves his own deep joy in the contemplation of their grandeur. He is the forerunner of all the nature-poets and nature-painters of our later times.

A pupil of
the Bellini

The boy Titian, however, soon left his mountain home for Venice, and is said to have begun his art-training at the age of ten, first under Gentile, and afterwards under Giovanni Bellini. But his chief inspiration was certainly derived from Giorgione.

Relation
between
Giorgione
and Titian

Though we give above the still accredited date of 1477 for the birth of Titian, the obscurity hanging over the early years of his life is at once removed if we accept the theory (so ably vindicated by Mr. Herbert Cook¹) of a later date, that of 1489. Recorded events become at once reconciled with probability, and we see Titian beginning his career at eighteen (like every

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1901.

other respectable painter of his day) instead of consuming twelve unimaginable years in inactivity and oblivion. This date accepted and we at once understand the relations between Titian and Giorgione: on the part of the elder a kind of benevolent patronage, on the part of the younger unbounded and enthusiastic admiration. It was clearly through Giorgione that Titian obtained his first engagement on an important piece of work, that of the frescoes on the German Exchange. It is equally clear that after the death of Giorgione in 1510 Titian was for a time without employment. He at last found work at Padua and his frescoes there are in fair preservation; but they are more curious than attractive. It was not in fresco work that Titian was to show his power as a painter. Though not so fastidious as Leonardo da Vinci, he had the same dislike to feeling fettered by the conclusions of his own first thoughts. He liked to alter and improve, and oil was the medium which he preferred. One who knew him tells us that Titian would make his first sketch rapidly with the brush; then turn his picture to the wall for months to give time for reflection. When he brought it later to the light, he would stare into it as though it were his most hated enemy, and then begin furiously to work in his alterations. This process of violent criticism and change would take place more than once. Between whiles Titian would be at work on other canvases, as he liked to have several on hand at once.

Death of
Giorgione,
1510

Titian's
frescoes at
Padua,
1511

His pre-
ference for
oils and
method of
working

It is thought that during these early years (1508-1514) Titian was painting some of his most attractive Madonnas, and his beautiful *Christ of the Tribute Money*, now at Dresden. There is a story told that some Germans staying in Venice paid a visit to Titian's studio, and rather superciliously remarked that there was only one master who understood how to give the right finish to a picture—their own incomparable Albert Dürer. Titian assured them with a smile that had his own chief aim in art been the attainment of finish, he might very probably have fallen into many of Dürer's mistakes. He preferred a broader style of work—yet he could show them an example in which he believed breadth of treatment and extreme

The Christ
of the
Tribute
Money

finish were combined. He then, as we may imagine, confounded those German critics by the sight of his *Christ of the Tribute Money*. Rarely has a finer conception of the head of Christ been carried to achievement: it is strong and yet delicately refined. Some say the beautiful face of Giorgione was the model from which Titian worked. In contrast to the calm and lofty purity of the Christ we have the cunning, malignant face of his enemy trying to entrap him by the question: "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, or no?" The rough, dark, almost ferocious-looking hand holds out the coin towards the sensitive fingers whose touch could heal. Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle speak of the exquisite care with which every detail is represented: "Amidst the profusion of locks there are ringlets of which we may count the hairs, and some of these seem to float in air, as if ready to wave at the spectator's breath".

Letter to
the Council
of Ten

It was in 1512 that Titian seems to have been invited to Rome by the art-loving Pope, Julius II. It was a wise friend to Venice who induced him to apply for work to the Venetian Council. Titian's letter on the subject is interesting:—

(1513, May 31.) "I, Titian of Cadore, having studied painting from childhood upward, and desirous of fame rather than profit, wish to serve the Doge and Signori rather than his highness the Pope and other Signori, who in past days and even now have urgently asked to employ me. I am therefore anxious to paint in the Hall of Council, beginning (if it please their sublimity) with the canvas of the battle on the side towards the Piazza, which is so difficult that no one as yet has had courage to attempt it," etc.

Its difficulty consisted in the absence of light on that particular side of the great Hall, and his offer was accepted. But soon the consent of the Council was revoked, at the instance, it is thought, of Bellini, whose position as the leading painter in Venice was undisputed. His opposition was based no doubt on a quite honest belief that the art of Titian was revolutionary, and not suited for the adornment of state apartments.

Death of
Bellini,
1516

After the death of Bellini in 1516 Titian was re-instated in the favour of the Council. But during the interval of uncer-



CHRIST AND THE TRIBUTE MONEY
TITIAN



CHRIST CARRYING THE CROSS

tainty he seems to have promised his services elsewhere, and we read of repeated remonstrances from the Council who command him in vain to paint his "battle-piece on the difficult side of the Council Hall overlooking the Piazza".

Titian's new patron was Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, who wished to complete a very fine collection of pictures already begun by his father and grandfather. Titian at Ferrara

It was for this duke that many of Titian's best-known pictures were painted, among them several of those in the National Gallery, to be mentioned later. The *Christ of the Tribute Money* was the property for centuries of the Dukes of Ferrara.

In 1516 Titian completed what is considered his master-piece, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, an altar-piece painted for the church of the Frari in Venice. The Assumption 1516

It hangs now in the Venice Academy, and remembering the extravagant praise of contemporary writers, we cannot help feeling a little disappointed on first seeing it. But Titian always painted with a full consideration of the light in which his pictures were to be placed. He would finish them on the spot, making many final alterations to ensure the effects he had planned. Under other conditions those effects are different, and less pleasing. But the composition of the picture is masterly. Below stand the Apostles; their robes of bright contrasted hues forming a belt of brilliant colour which stretches from side to side of the picture. Their attitudes of wonder and their uplifted eyes lead our attention upward. We pass through clouds borne on the shoulders of cherubs to the ascending figure of the Virgin, which is instinct with majestic grace. Her own eyes are lifted towards a further heaven beyond. The foreshortening of the features, and the strong lines of the strained neck—achieved with marvellous truth to nature—give to the face a look of intense exaltation and peace.

Michelangelo was in Venice in 1529 and rendered noble tribute to the genius of Titian, at the same time qualifying his praise with counsel. "It was a mistake," he said, "that the Venetian painters did not learn first of all to draw well, for if Michelangelo in Venice, 1529

this man were assisted by art as he is by nature, especially in imitating life, it would not be possible to surpass him—for he has the finest talent.” Rebuke is a stimulus to great minds, and the words and influence of Michelangelo bore fruit in Titian’s true masterpiece, *The Death of S. Peter Martyr*. But we know it only through a copy, as the renowned original, which drew hundreds of admiring artists later to Venice, was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1867. Rubens and our own Reynolds (among others) stood before this picture as abashed pupils.

It was in 1532 or 1533 that the Emperor Charles V. and Titian met; one, the greatest artist of the age, the other, the most powerful ruler in Europe. They recognized each other’s worth, and, in its essential nature, the relation between them was that of equals. The story is well known of the fallen brush, and how the Emperor, stooping to lift it from the floor, rebuked the astonished courtiers with the words: “The Titian is worthy to be served by the Caesar”.

The progress of Charles through Italy caused many flutterings of heart to the various princes whose independence was threatened. It was in his power to give or to take away. He had a disconcerting practice of appropriating any town that pleased him and presenting it to the Pope as a peace-offering; for, having not many years previously been at open war, he was now anxious to conciliate the Holy Father. The terrified princes tried to divert the covetous gaze of the Emperor by giving him pictures in the place of towns. A corrupt imperial secretary—with some knowledge of the value of pictures—carried on a brisk trade; and through his agency a large number of Italian masterpieces found their way to the galleries of Madrid, while the despoiled owners obtained a respite from further interference. We feel commiseration for these princes, especially for the Duke of Ferrara. He had extracted picture after picture from Titian, who still neglected his battle-piece in the Doge’s palace. Yet these treasures were, nearly all of them, resigned. Hasty copies made by inferior artists were hung in the Ferrara Gallery (still no doubt bearing the name of Titian!),

Death of
S. Peter
Martyr

1532 or
1533,
meeting
with the
Emperor

Charles V.
in Italy

and the priceless originals left Italy for ever. We can understand a little how so many false attributions arose when we remember this traffic in masterpieces.

After 1533 Titian's connection with the Emperor was close. He painted a portrait which so completely satisfied his royal patron that Charles rewarded him with handsome emoluments and bestowed on him the titles of Count Palatine and Knight of the Golden Spur. It is said that Charles refused to let any other paint his portrait after this. It needs greatness of mind in the painter to understand and interpret a great character. We should recall the position of Charles. Born to the inheritance of Austria, Spain and the Netherlands, besides some fair tracts of land in Italy, he had been elected in 1519 to the imperial throne of that strange, loosely constituted federation of German States which masqueraded through the centuries under the title of the Holy Roman Empire. He was lord, too, in the West, of the "new world" which Columbus had given to Spain. He bore on his face the marks of stern decision and of unrelaxing pride; yet mingled with these was the weariness that comes of isolation and the long-continued effort to sway the destinies of intractable men. The genius of Titian could read into the secrets of the Emperor's buried life, and, disregarding those trifles of manner which mislead the obtuse observer, he portrayed the man,—not only as he was, but as he wished to be.

Charles sat often to Titian; but the finest portrait of all is that which represents him on horseback at the battle of Mühlberg. Having triumphed at last over the Protestant princes of Germany, the Emperor summoned Titian to Augsburg, and there in 1548 this portrait was executed. It hangs now in the *Prado*, the renowned picture gallery of Madrid. Those who have seen it speak of it as deeply impressive. The solitary dignity of the Emperor—lord of half the world, yet separated by his rank from the simple joys and affections of the ordinary human lot—leaves on the memory an ineffable sense of tragedy. We can foresee the final crisis of despair when he will abandon all his thrones to seek forgetfulness in the

Titian as a
portrait
painter

Equestrian
portrait of
Charles V.
1548

cloister. This picture is a masterpiece of Titian's ripest years ; it is considered by many to be the finest portrait in the world.

Titian's
imaginative
insight

In the art of portrait painting Titian has no rivals ; even Velazquez, great as he is, must take a second place. His portraits, it is true, are so life-like that we never forget them. That of Philip IV. (No. 745), for instance, in our Gallery ; to have once seen it is enough to enable us to call it up to the mind's eye at will. But Titian paints something which is not there. We *feel* the emotion aroused by one of his portraits long years after we may have forgotten the actual features of the face. Ruskin has a fine passage about this power of evoking what in modern phrase would be called the "aura" which surrounds a man : "No man's soul is alone ; Laocoon or Tobias, the serpent has it by the heart or the angel by the hand ; the light or the fear of the spiritual things that move beside it may be seen on the body".¹ It is true he is speaking of Michelangelo, and the "ghostly vitality" of some of his statues ; it is true that he would probably have denied this power in Titian. Yet it does seem to be there. And many of us—bewildered by controversy—trace our conviction that the so-called *Ariosto* (No. 1944) in our Gallery is by Titian's hand, to this feeling of ghostly dread which is aroused as we look at it. "The serpent has him by the heart" are the words which best describe that insatiably unsatisfied face.

And before every portrait of Titian our own heart beats quicker ; the glory, the degradation, the unfathomable mystery of our complex human nature looks out through those inscrutable faces. According to the measure of our own inward experience will be the power of reading into and partially interpreting their secrets. A drama in one act, in one psychological moment, has (in the words of Leonardo) been "set forth instantly before the eye". It is this dramatic power of presentation, combined with profound insight into character, which has led many to couple the name of Titian with that of Shakespeare, and to apply to both the epithet "myriad-minded". Even Ruskin, who by temperament has no affinity with Titian,

¹ *Modern Painters* (ii., 115).

is compelled to recognize his genius, and has expressed it in a passage which "glows" with Venetian colour. "The sensualist will find sensuality in Titian, the thinker will find thought, the saint, sanctity, the colourist, colour, the anatomist, form, and the picture will never be a popular one in the full sense; for none of these narrower people will find their full sense so consulted as that the qualities which shall ensure their gratification shall be lifted or separated from others. Thus Titian is not soft enough for the sensualist—Correggio suits him better. Titian is not defined enough for the formalist—Leonardo suits him better. Titian is not pure enough for the religionist—Raphael suits him better. Titian is not polite enough for the man of the world—Vandyck suits him better. Titian is not forcible enough for the lover of the picturesque—Rembrandt suits him better. So Correggio is popular with a certain set, and Rembrandt with a certain set, but nobody cares much at heart about Titian. Only there is a strange undercurrent of everlasting murmur about his name which means the deep consent of all great men that he is greater than they—the consent of those who having sat long enough at his feet have found in that restrained harmony of his strength,—there are indeed depths of such balanced power more wonderful than all those separate manifestations in inferior painters:—a softness more exquisite than Correggio's, a purity loftier than Leonardo's, a force mightier than Rembrandt's, a sanctity more solemn even than Raphael's."¹

It was Titian's happy fortune not to outlive his greatness. He at last achieved a splendid *Battle of Cadore* for the Doge's palace, but, like *The Death of S. Peter Martyr*, this perished too by fire. He painted the portraits of nearly all the greatest personages of his century, among others of many doges, and he entertained in his beautiful villa those who came from far to do him honour. In 1576 he was struck down by the plague which that year broke out with violence in Venice. He had lived on to a great age, even though we accept the

¹ *The Two Paths* (pp. 62-64).

later birth-date of 1489; yet we read of no loosening of his grasp on life, of no impairing of his magnificent powers. To the end he was "Tiziano, il divino," the divine Titian.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

Bacchus
and
Ariadne

England has grounds for self-congratulation when we remember how many fine pictures by Titian are to be found both in private collections and in the National Gallery. We have already spoken of the portrait (No. 1944) and the *Madonna and Child with S. John and S. Catherine* (No. 635).¹ But the *Bacchus and Ariadne* is our greatest treasure. This is the same Ariadne who lived in Crete, and saw year by year the youths and maidens arriving from Athens to be devoured by her father's horrible monster, the Minotaur. When Prince Theseus came with the band of victims Ariadne saw and loved him, and gave him the sword with which to slay the monster, and the clue of silk which enabled him to trace back his way through the labyrinth. But, as Shakespeare tells us, "Men were deceivers ever"; and Theseus, having sailed away with the brave girl who had saved his life, soon grew weary of her, and abandoned her on the island of Naxos. While she lay asleep, he collected his men, and they treacherously pushed off in their boat. We can see it faintly on the horizon. Then, as Ariadne awoke to find herself forsaken, the god Bacchus, in his chariot drawn by leopards and attended by all his rout, came down impetuously to claim her as his bride and carry her away with him to Olympus. The whole scene is one of surprise and joyous animation. Ariadne is turning to fly while Bacchus with god-like speed is springing towards her from the chariot. The clash of the cymbals and the laughter of the bright-eyed little faun who leads the procession, give sound as well as motion to the picture. The grotesque creatures crowding in behind are thrown into the shadow, so that the eye but half perceives their ugliness, yet their presence gives a boisterous vitality to the picture which accords perfectly with our conception of the wine-god. And over all is thrown a glamour of colour: the purple-red cloak of Bacchus, the sharper red of Ariadne's scarf—her blue mantle and the blue of the sea—challenge and answer each other in unexpected harmony. Even the flowers

¹ See p. 35.



CHARLES V AT THE BATTLE OF MÜHLBERG

TITIAN

Prado, Madrid

in the foreground, most accurately and delicately finished, give an added sense of gaiety. However fastidious may be our personal taste, and however little we might wish to live in the daily presence of so riotous a scene, yet none who look long at this picture can fail to recognize its artistic power. To the minds already haunted by the spell of classic myths, in particular the Dionysos myth of the grape—in which sunshine and dew are mingled—there will be revealed in this picture a strain of subtle poetry. The imaginative power revealed in it is admirably analysed in Lamb's essay on *The Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty in Modern Art*. He sees in it the sadness of Ariadne just as surely as the rejoicing of Bacchus. "The broken heart for Theseus was not lightly to be pieced up by a god."

We shall notice in all Titian's pictures the freedom and vigour of the execution, the rich glow of the colour, and above all his masterly treatment of flesh. In No. 635 we have a good example of this particular quality; the neck of the Virgin is not only white and firm, but suggests the yielding texture—an almost downy softness—of beautiful human flesh. There is a transparency in the skin of S. Catherine which tells of youth; the Babe is more delicate still, and the rich brown of the sunburnt legs of S. John is warm with life.

Contemporary with Titian and surviving him were two Tintoretto painters whose work is greatly admired; the one for its extraordinary, impulsive vigour, the other for its magnificence of colour. These two were Jacopo Robusti, known as Tintoretto (the little dyer), and Paul Veronese.

Tintoretto (so called from his father's trade) is said to have been for a short time a pupil of Titian. And it is further said that Titian, annoyed at his rapid progress, grew jealous and dismissed him. It is certain that Tintoretto learned most from his own careful study of natural objects and the human form. He was his own master and aimed at perfection. The motto inscribed over his studio door was "The drawing of Michelangelo and the colour of Titian". With equal zeal he determined to master every secret of chiaroscuro. He worked

much by artificial light, he tried experiments in the manipulation of shadows, and by suspending clay figures in various attitudes and various lights he became proficient in the art of foreshortening. He takes an evident delight in displaying his own mastery over technical difficulties, and very often produces effects, especially when dealing with light, that are astonishingly clever. He worked with such rapidity as to earn the nickname of "Il furioso" (the furious one), and unfortunately the impatience which accompanied his rapidity often resulted in inferior work.

His
imagina-
tion

But the most characteristic feature of Tintoretto's work is the extraordinary and powerful imagination which is revealed in every picture which emanated from his brain. Much of the interest in his pictures is due to the unexpected suggestions aroused by some of the minute details which he introduces.

The
Crucifixion
in the
Scuola di
San Rocco

For instance, in his justly celebrated *Crucifixion* (in the Scuola di San Rocco at Venice) he has represented it with all the life-like realism of an historic scene; Roman centurions and soldiers, Pharisees and scribes, secret disciples of the Christ, are all faithfully portrayed. But he adds a weird touch which is all his own; he has filled the picture with an unearthly light emanating from the Cross, and the intensity of this light throws into ominous gloom the roofs and towers of the guilty city which has delivered to death the Son of God. And beneath the cross he has introduced an ass munching a fragment of withered palm. So strange a detail it seems, almost irrelevant; yet the imagination is directed by it to the triumphant entry into Jerusalem only a few days ago, and the garments strewn in the roadway before the approaching King, and the loud hosannas of the people. It is here that their fickle hearts have brought him, here to the loneliness and torture of the cross.

Tintoretto's pictures are full of this "penetrative imagination," as Ruskin calls it. He startles us into thought and by the clarity of his own perceptions of spiritual truth he forces us to comprehend.

In *Christ before Pilate* (p. 100) we see how Tintoretto emphasizes the significance of a picture by his use of light. The

same sunbeam which has searched out the guilty Judas (trying in vain to hide) plunges into darkness the wilfully unjust judge. And irradiated by the same light from heaven stands the silent, majestic, white-robed figure of the sinless Christ.

Tintoretto's pictures are almost too full of thought to afford us immediate pleasure; and he has a confusing way of crowding so much into his canvas that even the outward eye is overwhelmed. His works were admired but only partially understood in his own day; they are not popular now. Nevertheless the rapid and bold technique of these pictures excites the admiration of connoisseurs; and the influence of Tintoretto on the development of modern art has probably been greater than is fully realized.

We dare not dwell long over the works of this remarkable man; those who wish to know more about him must go to Ruskin, who understands Tintoretto, and is his best interpreter. Rightly to enjoy his pictures, we must travel to Venice where the best are to be found. The most famous of them is perhaps *Paradise*, an immense picture which covers an entire wall in one of the large Halls of the Doge's palace. The specimens in our Gallery give no adequate idea of his greatness. The *S. George* (No. 16) is one of his pure extravagances. The *Origin of the Milky Way* (No. 131) is so full of commotion and confusion that at first we feel repelled. Yet, gradually, if we look, the beauty of Juno becomes magical. Not even in a Greek statue can we find this ethereal whiteness, and purity, and grace. Her body seems translucent, or rather it seems to be wholly made of light. She herself is the embodied legend: a flash of milk that has grown luminous, like a galaxy of stars.

A complete contrast to Tintoretto is Paolo Caliari, better known as Paul Veronese. His pictures present no intellectual puzzles, and are free from the extravagances into which Tintoretto, by the fury of his imagination, was often driven. But Paul Veronese satisfies and almost intoxicates the sense of sight. His pictures glow with the richest colours blent into a harmony so perfect that it seems inevitable, like the colour-pageants provided by Nature. We are not disposed to criticize when we

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

Paul
Veronese,
1528-1588

see, thrown up against a cobalt sky, the rose-red fruit and the brilliant gold-tinted leaves of an autumnal apple-tree; nor do we question the primitive scale of colour presented by the rainbow. There is a similar elemental simplicity in the work of Veronese which fills us with delight, a genuine non-reflective—artistic delight. If we expect more we shall be hard to please. Veronese painted only what he saw, the magnificence of Venetian life in his own days. His Mary Magdalene, his princesses of Persia, and even the lowly Madonna, are all arrayed in the decorative costumes of a fashion-loving age. They lend themselves admirably to colour schemes; and the full-sized figures, thrown into relief by imposing architectural backgrounds, are full of the dignity and suavity to be expected in the manners of the great.

Marriage
at Cana

Perhaps his most famous picture is the immense *Marriage at Cana*, painted originally for a convent in Venice, and now hanging in the Louvre. It represents a magnificent banqueting scene into which are introduced portraits of many of the celebrities of his day: Charles V., Francis I., Mary, Queen of England, and many noblemen and painters of Venice. It is no easy matter to discover among the gorgeously appressed throng the quiet figure of the Christ. But the painter's aim was to delight us with a pageant, and he achieves his aim.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

Our examples are characteristic and good. *The Family of Darius at the feet of Alexander after the Battle of Issus* (No. 294) is interesting as a representation of an historic scene, even though we are perfectly conscious that not a single detail of costume or environment is historically correct. But a further interest lies in the fact that all the principal figures are portraits, and that they represent members of the Pisani family, here brought before us in the actual splendour and elegance of the life then lived at Venice.

Vision of
S. Helena

His *Vision of S. Helena* (No. 1041) is one of the rare specimens of his idealistic treatment of a subject, and its delicate charm leads many to regret his almost exclusive addiction to banquets. They seem to have become what the French call an obsession. In a note found at the back of one of his

drawings he records the resolve to paint—when he has time —“a sumptuous repast in a superb gallery at which the Virgin, the Saviour, and S. Joseph shall be present, served by the richest *cortège* of angels that it is possible to imagine, who shall offer them, on plates of silver and gold, the most exquisite viands and fruits. Others shall be occupied in presenting to them, in transparent crystal and gold cups, precious liqueurs, to show the zeal with which happy spirits serve the Lord.”

Each artist sees his own vision, and must follow the impulse of his own genius. Our painter-poet, Milton, conceived of a different banquet when describing the dreams, during his forty days' fast in the wilderness, of the famished Son of God, who thought

“That sometimes with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.”

“Nothing in Milton is finelier fancied than these temperate dreams of the divine Hungerer” is Lamb's comment on the passage.

Yet in contrast to high poetry, there is something artlessly delightful in the thought of this simple-hearted Venetian offering his best imaginings to his Lord. To him this earthly life must have seemed a perpetual feast; he has embodied its revelries in his pictures and shown us all the glamour of the dazzling materialism of Venice.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SCHOOLS OF NORTH ITALY

The
Milanese
School

THERE is a tendency when speaking of the Milanese School of painting, to regard Leonardo da Vinci as its founder. But this is only partially correct. There was a native school of painting in North Italy some years before he forsook Florence, and sought a new patron in Milan.

Vincenzo
Foppa,
1425?
to 1515?

The true founder of the Milanese School was Vincenzo Foppa, to whose picture of *The Adoration of the Magi* allusion has already been made (p. 27). He is said to have learned his art in the school of Squarcione at Padua, where he studied the antique in company with Mantegna. Most of his fresco work in Milan has perished, but the few pictures which bear his name prove that he had reached a high degree of technical excellence. His first signed work bears the date of 1458, and he was still living in 1515.

Ambrogio
Borgo-
gnone,
1455?-1523
to 60?

Of his many pupils Ambrogio Borgognone is the best known, and the originality of his work gives it a lasting interest. Undistracted by the brilliant inventions of Leonardo, and the growing influence which he exercised in Milan, Borgognone kept his eyes fixed on his own vision of beauty. For his mind dwelt habitually with spiritual presences, and he used his art in the service of religion. We are reminded of Fra Angelico, whose simple piety kept him in the old restricted paths while Masaccio was inaugurating a new era.

Contrasted
with Fra
Angelico

Yet the Milanese painter differs in this from the Florentine, that his piety has in it a certain strain of austerity which we do not find in the paintings of Fra Angelico. The latter brings heaven so near as to stir in our hearts an eager impulse of



NINE CARTHUSIAN BROTHERS FOLLOWING CHRIST

BORGOGNONE
Museum, Pavia

approach. We remember how Christian and Hopeful "drawing near to the city, had yet a more perfect view thereof. It was builded of pearls and precious stones, also the street thereof was paved with gold; so that by reason of the natural glory of the city, and the reflection of the sunbeams upon it, Christian with desire fell sick; Hopeful also had a fit or two of the same disease." The joyful confidence of Angelico sometimes provokes this malady in those who learn to know him in the cells of San Marco.

But the pictures of Borgognone put a curb on presumption; they breathe a spirit of aloofness from earth which accentuates our consciousness of the fact that we are still here. We feel not only the beauty, but also the severity of the Christian faith. Our own picture of *The Marriage of S. Catherine* (already described, p. 34) is full of this combined remoteness and solemnity. It is one of the finest examples of his work.

Borgognone was an architect as well as a painter, and he was employed upon the structure and adornment of the glorious Certosa at Pavia, already mentioned in our notice of Perugino (p. 87). Blending harmoniously with all the splendour of this richly decorated Renaissance church are the quiet pictures of Borgognone. His *Sant Ambrogio*, the great Archbishop Ambrose of Milan, is considered by many as his masterpiece; and he has also in this church a *Crucifixion* which is full of reverence and aspiration.

There is perhaps no picture in the world more deeply charged with the spirit of religion than the small tempera picture here reproduced. The original painting is in the Accademia at Pavia. This group of Carthusian brothers, dedicated to silence, have found the peace which so many pursue, in a voluntary following of the cross which is borne by Christ. These things, as the old moralists would observe, are a parable. The vow of silence and cloistered solitude are wisely discountenanced by our modern saner view of life. Yet the true "way of peace" leads now as then in the same direction, towards self-renunciation and the cross. The words written in Latin on that floating ribbon are, "Whosoever will come

after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”.

Bernardino Luini,
1475?-
1532? Far more widely known and admired than Borgognone is the Milanese painter, Bernardino Luini. Yet in his own day he does not seem to have been rated at his true worth. Vasari's allusion to him is exasperatingly vague. We have very little knowledge of his life, and though it is believed that he was born at Luino on Lake Maggiore, the date of his birth is uncertain. Even his works were for a long time overlooked and many of them falsely attributed to Leonardo da Vinci.

The Burial of S. Catherine The first example of Luini's work which has in it the true loveliness of his mature manner is one of a series of frescoes on the life of S. Catherine of Alexandria. It is the last scene when the angels bear her dead body far across sea and land in order to lay it to rest in the convent on Mount Sinai. We see them in the picture floating above the handsome carved sarcophagus in which S. Catherine is to be laid. One angel holds the feet; another, with widespread wings, and looking us directly in the face, has put both hands firmly beneath the body; a third is tenderly supporting the head, which, with shut eyes and fluttering hair, is being lowered into the tomb. The serenity of that last sleep of S. Catherine is perfectly rendered. This fresco, now in the Brera Gallery at Milan, has called forth many words of praise (see p. 33). We show it on p. 126.

Leonardo's Academy We know that Leonardo came to Milan in 1482 or 1483, and that he remained there until 1499, but whether Luini ever worked under him cannot be proved. By the year 1500 he held a recognized position as a painter, and there are traces of the influence of Leonardo in all his later work. Luini's individuality, however, was not overshadowed by this influence; his own genius, on the contrary, was stimulated by it and gained in strength. That any of his pictures should have been mistaken for the work of Leonardo surprises us now, for the differences between the two men are fundamental. Ruskin, more than any other critic, has helped to restore to Luini his own beautiful pictures.

In the works of da Vinci it is the intellect which prevails; in the works of Luini, the heart. And this extreme intellectuality in Leonardo da Vinci deprives even his religious pictures of the genuine spiritual fervour which animates the work of so many others. One critic questions whether any man can honestly say that he has felt the better for looking at any picture of Leonardo's. We need not agree with this extreme point of view. But the pictures of Luini, as judged by another critic, create a mood: and that mood is one of chastened penitence and devotion. The lives of the two men were a contrast: the one was rich, powerful, a friend of princes; the other, industrious and unnoticed, worked for the support of a family. The man who thought in worlds looked out as from a mountain top at all the "kingdoms of this world and the glory of them"; the modest home of the other was lighted by the Star of Bethlehem, and he saw what the Wise Men saw and was content.

We shall find that nearly all Luini's pictures are of religious subjects, and many of them remain still on the church-walls for which they were painted. In Milan there is much of his work, especially in the Church of San Maurizio, and a very large number of his pictures—nearly fifty—are now collected in the Brera Gallery. It is there that we may best learn to know him. One fault in his work cannot be overlooked, he fails in the art of *composition*. And so when many figures are introduced a want of coherence is felt, and frequently ungraceful lines result from the defective arrangement of the several details. Luini is therefore at his best when dealing with single figures, or groups containing only three or four.

Our example in the National Gallery (No. 18) is particularly fine, for in it Luini has not only given us a group of strongly individualized faces, but he has mastered the problem of composition, and produced a picture which is at unity with itself. We see here too the special type of spiritual beauty which Luini gradually evolved. Its extreme "sweetness"—for the same type appears in the face of Christ, of the Madonna and of the younger saints—has led some to accuse Luini of a lack

of virility in his work. This arises probably from the confusion so often made between strength and violence. Many unthinking persons regard an exhibition of passion as an exhibition of strength. There is in truth no surer sign of strength than the pure, delicate "sweetness" of countenance which is attained only by the conquest of passion. Luini presents this exquisite type of face with a charm unrivalled by any other painter.

Madonna
and Child
at Venice

The Madonna of our illustration—one of the few he ever painted with lifted eyelids—shows Luini's beautiful pensive ideal of motherhood. This lovely picture is in the Layard Collection at Venice.¹

Ruskin's
praise of
Luini.

We cannot refrain from quoting part of Ruskin's eloquent eulogy of Luini, to be found in his *Queen of the Air*.² "Luini is the only man who entirely united the religious temper which was the spirit-life of art, with the physical power which was its bodily life. He joins the purity and passion of Angelico to the strength of Veronese: the two elements, poised in perfect balance, are so calmed and restrained, each by the other, that most of us lose the sense of both. The artist does not see the strength, by reason of the chastened spirit in which it is used; and the religious visionary does not recognize the passion, by reason of the frank human truth with which it is rendered."

Antonio
Allegri
(Cor-
reggio),
1494-1534

It is a far cry from Luini to Correggio; yet it is in the group of North Italian painters that his name, as a rule, is included. He was born in 1496 at the little town of Correggio, near Modena, and in the days before he became famous was known as Antonio Allegri. The name Allegri (the joyous one) is descriptive of the man and his art. His pictures appeal direct to the artistic sense; they do not trouble us with thought, but seem to catch us away in a moment from our sober daily routine to a lovely, irrational land of laughter, and dance, and singing. It was almost impossible for Correggio to paint solemn or painful subjects, and so even in his religious pictures it is on the happiness of the holy Mother and Child that

¹ Now in the National Gallery (No. 3090).

² *The Queen of the Air* (Popular Edition, p. 211).



THE BURIAL OF ST. CATHERINE

LUINI

1 Brevia, Milan. (See p. 124)



MADONNA AND CHILD

LUINI

Loyard Collection, Venice

he chiefly dwells. We have already noticed the absence of religious feeling in his *Marriage of S. Catherine* (p. 35).

Until lately very little was known about the story of his life. Because he worked chiefly in Parma and his own town of Correggio it was thought that he had been influenced by Mantegna and the painters of the Lombard School. Modern critics, however, show very clearly that the work of Correggio is more nearly allied to that of Raphael and the Umbrian School than to that of the Northern painters. It is believed now that he studied as a boy in Bologna under Francia, whose work had so unmistakable an influence on the artistic development of Raphael. When only fifteen he probably went to Mantua with another Bolognese painter (Costa) under whom he is thought to have studied. At Mantua he must have seen much of Mantegna's work (we remember *The Triumph of Caesar*), and this would explain those characteristics in his own early pictures which led to the tradition that he was one of Mantegna's pupils.

It was certainly in Mantua that he came under the great Influence of Dosso Dossi moulding force of his life. For, singularly original as Correggio's work seems to be, yet in tracing its development, there is a time when it suddenly assumed a new vigour. The artist who contributed to this change was Dosso Dossi (1479?-1542). Though not ranking with the greatest of Italian painters, yet Dosso Dossi is remarkable for his mastery over the problem of light—one which fascinates by its difficulty the artists of every age. Dosso had treated it with a high measure of success; and Correggio, quick to learn, soon surpassed his master. He fills his canvases with a most entrancing feeling of light, which warms and cheers us like real sunshine. In this quality no painter of any age has excelled him.

Being a man of a highly emotional temperament, all the Early pictures are his best pictures of Correggio (like those of Giorgione) may be regarded as lyrical. Hence his early work is his best; the work of those years when every impress of natural beauty came upon him as a fresh revelation and his joy found expression in the language of art,

La Notte

The best known of all his pictures is *La Notte* (*The Night*) in the Dresden gallery (p. 25). This is strictly a Nativity and the shepherds are represented as kneeling before the new-born Child. All is darkness in the midnight world without, but from the infant Christ there breaks forth a blaze of light which illuminates the scene in the stable. Above, in one corner, is a group of angels; but instead of the tranquil grace with which an early Florentine would have endowed them, we have here a confusion of violently agitated legs and arms that suggest disorder rather than joy. An increasing interest in art, and a correcter taste, have led the public to treat this picture of late years with less favour. As Mr. Berenson expresses it, "*The Night* has to some considerable degree fallen from grace". In the same gallery is a fine example of Correggio's early and less affected manner; it is called *The Madonna of S. Francis*, and is believed to be his first easel picture.

Pictures on
classic
subjects

The happy-hearted Allegri is more truly himself in scenes from the classical writers. The exquisite, dimpled *putti* (or cherubs) in his so-called religious pictures are already half pagan; and Correggio depicts them with infinite charm. These *putti* are no ordinary cherubs. Mr. Berenson describes them as "little children as artless and simple as real childhood, but bearing far greater joys than childhood ever felt. . . . The Renaissance had made the 'putto' the symbol of its own joy in life and of its own emotions, and a painter who put into his 'putti' all the life, simplicity and restlessness of real childhood, and at the same time all the immense rapture and joy in mere existence that Italy was feeling in the beginning of the sixteenth century could not fail to be appreciated."¹ These gay little creatures are introduced as cupids or fauns into nearly all Correggio's classical subjects.

The
Education
of Cupid

Our own picture in the National Gallery (No. 10) is a good example. It is known by two names: *The School of Love* and *The Education of Cupid*. The pearly softness of the

¹ *Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (First Series, p. 44).

flesh tints and the roundness of the limbs give a shock of delight to the tactile imagination, and the flood of light which seems to break from the picture—even in smoke-dimmed London—acts like a tonic on the spirits. The fact that poor little Cupid happens to be crying because he does not like learning his letters has no sobering effect on our sense of gaiety, and we are only surprised that two such perfectly beautiful and unconventional beings as Venus and Mercury should be troubling about books and letters at all. Where they live such trivialities must be out of place. We feel before this picture the force of Mr. Berenson's eloquent tribute to the genius of Correggio. Alluding to the likeness which many recognize between the work of Titian and Shakespeare, of Michelangelo and Milton, he adds: "A lover of these poets cannot help finding the corresponding painters much more intelligible. But centuries had to elapse before emotions so intense as those Correggio felt found expression in literature—in Shelley when he is at his best, and in Keats when he is perfect."¹

It was on this lyrical note, expressing the supreme ecstasy of the life of sense, that Italian art died. In Allegri—the joyous one—it rings pure to the last; in the great Venetians, Giorgione and Titian, there is heard through it an undertone of the tragic and unappeasable soul-hunger for which the beauty of a whole world is not enough:—

"Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn."²

The story of Italian art is the story of man's pursuit of ideal beauty. In the child-like days of faith he sought for it in religion, and the aim of art was to give spiritual expression to the human face. Then came the intellectual stage, when great minds, such as those of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Mantegna, felt the need for correctness of design. And lastly followed the sensuous delight in colour; and this passion for colour resulted in a gradual loss of the feeling for expression and purity

¹ *Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (First Series, p. 45).

² *Browning's Two in the Campagna*.

of line. Tintoretto made a last effort to check the coming deterioration. His motto, "The drawing of Michelangelo and the colour of Titian," might serve for the whole *Eclectic School* which afterwards arose in Italy. These painters, as though aware of their impotence, chose out the chief merits of their predecessors and tried to combine them in their own pictures. Their work is therefore wanting in sincerity, and cannot give us lasting pleasure. We may feel attracted at first by the works of such painters as Guido Reni, the Carracci, and others; but, because they are copyists, we shall soon feel that their work is artificial. The *Form* is excellent; they have borrowed from every possible source, and are experts in every artistic device; but the old themes have lost their hold on personal belief, and no fresh source of inspiration has been discovered. It is only when the artist feels strongly the truth and beauty of what he expresses in paint that he can convey to us a corresponding feeling. A sense of wondering delight mingled with the assurance that the thing we see is true, is the most abiding impression produced by all great works of art.

CHAPTER XV

THE EARLY FLEMISH SCHOOLS

PASSING from Italy to Flanders we meet with an entirely different school of painting. We are now concerned with a radically different race.

We must recall (see p. 37) that after the fall of Rome a new chapter was opened in the history of the world. Yet from that time onward the same old line of demarcation remained between north and south, roughly the forty-sixth parallel of latitude. South of this were the nations who submitted to the moulding influence of the old Roman spirit of law and order; they moved rapidly towards civilization. North of this line were the pure Teutonic peoples who preserved their "barbarism," and in consequence when their civilization slowly came they were able to give to the world quite new conceptions of government, social life, and the practice of the fine arts.

On a first introduction to Flemish art, we are almost certain to feel a shock of repulsion. We are expecting beauty, and we find ourselves in the presence of obtrusive and unabashed ugliness. Indeed so grotesque and angular are some of the figures represented in Flemish pictures that we may be tempted to exclaim with Hamlet: "that some of Nature's journeymen must have made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably".

Having accepted this initial peculiarity, we must next proceed (if earnest students) to exercise those "large charities of the imagination" which can alone help us to understand what at first seems devoid of attraction. Why, we ask, is there this

Fall of
Rome,
A. D. 476

Lack of
beauty in
Flemish
pictures

Adverse
conditions
of life

neglect of beauty? Partly because there were no classic models inherited from the Greeks by which to cultivate a just taste. Partly—a very obvious explanation—because of the difference of climate and manner of life. In the warm climate of the south, man lives the free open-air life which moulds the human form to beauty. But lightly clad, often bare-footed, he moves with a natural grace unknown in the colder lands of the north. The artist of the south instinctively perceives that there is no more beautiful object in nature than a perfectly modelled human form. But the artist in the north sees clumsier figures, disguised in unshapely wrappings of burdensome clothes, and his eye seeks elsewhere for gratification.

Love of
colour and
landscape

For gratification the artistic instinct must have; and even in the north does find it. We shall notice in Flemish painters a great love of colour, and a delight in the representation of crowds and of buildings; so that by careful grouping and contrasted varieties of colour a fine decorative effect is produced. They have also a feeling for the beauty of landscape which appears very early in their pictures. Flowers too are held very dear by all northern painters, and it has been remarked that the "Madonna of the Rose-hedge" (a representation of her in a bower) is the peculiar invention of the north.

Objective
character
of Flemish
art

As distinguished from Italian art we notice that Flemish art is much more objective. The painters do not express their own moods in their work as the Italians so often do, but copy faithfully whatever is presented to the eye. Nothing is too insignificant for the patient observation of a Flemish painter, he will reproduce every stitch in a piece of lace or embroidery with almost as much care as was required by the fingers which held the needle. He will find in every bead in a necklace, or brass nail in an old chest, more beautiful effects of colour and chiaroscuro than we could have thought it possible to compress into so tiny a surface. The Italians raise our thoughts towards ideal beauty; the Flemings show us the beauty of the little things that are about us every day. But the Flemings did not look only at the accessories of life in furniture and clothes, they looked too at the face. Even in their pictures of crowds, each

face deserves study; they were amongst the earliest to introduce portraits into their sacred pictures. Not in the central group of Mother and Child, which as a rule is cold and wooden, but in the attendant saints. And in the faces represented, what they sought was character, not beauty of feature.

Sir Martin Conway,¹ with his unfailing sympathetic insight, has well interpreted their aims: to show men, who were strong in the masculine arts of industry, prompt decision, foresight, and the exercise of rule; and women—as typified in their attenuated and solemn Virgins—who held the virtue of chastity dearer than life. The two primitive virtues of strength and purity are to be found in these quaint old Flemish faces—literally old in years, because, as Sir Martin Conway again argues, it is age which stamps character on the face. In the young there is the charm of promise; but on old faces which have encountered many a storm, and been buffeted by the winds of adversity, there is left a record into which Flemish artists were not afraid to peer. And in portraiture, as in the rendering of inanimate objects, they again faithfully reproduce every minutest detail.

The Flemings were essentially a nation of traders; and their system of trade-guilds, both for merchants and craftsmen, exercised a determining influence on every form of art production. Guilds of
Painters Painters were craftsmen who sought protection and technical training by enrolling themselves in a guild. The result of this practice was that few individual names became conspicuous; but good traditions were preserved and handed on from master to apprentice, and a very high degree of technical skill was attained.

Miniature painting, as found in the borders of illuminated missals, was in fact the first form of brush work in which Flemish artists were trained. Instead of the bold rapid style acquired in Italy from working in fresco, the Flemish artist learned to curb the freedom of his fingers, and to apply to the beautifying of his small surface the patient delicate labour of the watch-maker or jeweller.

¹ *Early Flemish Artists* (chap. iii.).

War of Independence

The final impulse of self-expression in the language of art was created by the long struggle of the Flemings against the despotism of their feudal over-lord. For a war in the cause of liberty fosters nobler qualities than those required for successful trade. The second of their heroic leaders, the van Artevelde, fell in the battle of Roosebeke in 1382. Only two years later died their tyrannical count, and the province passed by marriage under the rule of Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. Liberty and justice were established; and we enter on the finest period of Flemish art as the direct outcome of the national struggle for independence. It is therefore in the fifteenth century, with the brilliant constellation of the van Eycks, that Flemish art may be said properly to begin.

Flanders annexed to Burgundy, 1384

By the scrutinizing gaze, it is true, of the antiquarian, other faint luminaries may be discerned far back in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But we dare not linger over that first obscure period. We begin with the van Eycks.

Hubert van Eyck, 1366?-1426

The elder (Hubert) was born at Maaseyck about 1366, and the younger some twenty years later. Hubert van Eyck is regarded by competent critics as one of the greatest painters that ever lived. His name has been overshadowed by that of his younger and better-known brother, and in consequence many of his works have for centuries been attributed to Jan. Research is now diligently engaged in the effort to restore to Hubert the works which are rightfully his.¹ We will confine ourselves to one famous picture, the ground-plan of which certainly emanated from the brain of Hubert. The greater part of the execution is also believed to be his. This picture is *The Mystic Lamb* now in the Cathedral Church of S. Bavon in Ghent.

The Mystic Lamb

This immense altar-piece consists of many sections which all bear a part in the one solemn mystery of the redeeming power of the Lamb. "I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. v. 6-10). S. John tells us further of how the elders fell down before it, and "sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wert slain, and

¹ See Mr. W. H. J. Weale's recent work, *Hubert and John van Eyck*.



THE ADORATION OF THE LAMB
HUBERT AND JAN VAN EYCK

hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth". Let us see how Hubert van Eyck has interpreted in pictorial language this marvellous vision.

His altar-piece (when perfect) consisted of two horizontal compartments, the upper containing seven panels, the lower five. In the upper central panel (No. 4), seated on a throne is God the Father, represented with a triple crown upon his head, a sceptre in one hand and the other raised in blessing. On either side (Nos. 3 and 5) are the Blessed Virgin, and S. John the Baptist. In Nos. 2 and 6 are groups of angels, and in 1 and 7 are the nude figures of Adam and Eve. In the lower section one large picture extends below the three figures of God the Father, the Virgin mother, and S. John. This central picture known as *The Adoration of the Lamb* is given in our illustration. It is as full of matter for thought as a religious treatise, and yet is so masterfully represented to the eye that a sense of unity and pictorial beauty is secured.

In the centre, uplifted on an altar, stands the redeeming Lamb, while blood flows from his pierced breast into a chalice. Above, the Holy Ghost is seen descending as a dove from the throne of God the Father; while round the altar kneel angels holding the various instruments of the passion. From the four corners of the picture four groups approach, composed in the upper section of white-robed virgin martyrs and "Fathers of the Church". Below these are crowds of worshippers, of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation". Outside this picture of the Adoration the imagination is still led on to the conception of multitudes and multitudes of adoring followers of the Lamb. To the right are two panels (4 and 5) in which groups are shown of the "Holy Hermits" and the "Holy Pilgrims". These stand for the contemplative life. To the left (Nos. 1 and 2) are the representatives of the active life. This conception of the two ways in which man can serve God, in the world as well as in the cloister, we have already met with in Italian art. Here the active life is very finely represented.

The
Adoration
of the
Lamb

In panel 1 are the "Just Judges," a group of dignified men, richly attired, and riding on horseback. The foremost figure, a benevolent looking old man, in blue velvet trimmed with fur, is Hubert van Eyck himself. He rides on a superb grey horse, and the portrait is said to have been painted after his death by his younger brother Jan. We may see this brother too in the same group. In panel 2 the "Warriors of Christ," also mounted, clad in bright armour and with banners flying from their lance-heads, are seen approaching the Lamb. We may contrast this with Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, truly a pæan of earthly joy. Here, in an age of faith, we have an embodied Hallelujah.

This picture is one of the most interesting in the world. The theme it is true, was already familiar to mediæval artists, but Hubert van Eyck has made it live. Rossetti used to speak of the "fundamental brain-work" necessary to the production of a good poem. Let us imagine if we can the output of brain-work involved in the composition of a picture like this. And in its execution every art of the craftsman has been employed: correct perspective, harmony of colour, careful drawing, and a variety of expression in all these human faces which proves minute observation and knowledge. The fact that Jan completed it cannot rob Hubert of the honour due to him for the design.

It is painted in oils, and the brothers van Eyck are credited with the discovery of that medium. More probably they introduced an improvement in the application which greatly facilitated quick work and a luminous effect. Their secret was for long confined to Flanders.

Death of
Hubert van
Eyck, 1426

In 1426 the elder brother, Hubert, died; and *The Mystic Lamb* was finished and publicly exhibited in 1432. From that date until now it has been an object of study and wondering admiration.

It is grievous to think that a national treasure of this incalculable value should have been tampered with and mutilated. But its history is one of vicissitudes and hair-breadth escapes. It finally went as loot during the wars of Napoleon to

Paris; and when returned, the wings were separated from the central panels. The former have now found their way to Berlin, and only the *Adoration* itself, with the three figures above it, now remains in S. Bavon's at Ghent. But copies of the lost panels have been added, so that the general effect is restored.¹

About Jan van Eyck far more is known than about his elder brother, although the date of his birth is uncertain.

Jan van
Eyck born
after 1380

In 1425 he became court painter to Philip the Good, the noblest and most munificent of the Dukes of Burgundy. The position was in every way honourable, and we find that van Eyck was often sent on embassies to foreign courts. After the completion of *The Mystic Lamb* in 1432, his name became known throughout Europe, and the duke spared no opportunity of showing him honour.

At Bruges,
1425

Between 1432 and 1440 van Eyck painted many pictures about whose authenticity there can be no doubt, for on the quaint old original frames he has written his name in full, adding sometimes the motto of his choice, "Als ich kan" (As I can). In 1441 Jan van Eyck died at Bruges, and there lies buried.

His death,

The greater number of his existing works are portraits, though he has also painted Madonnas, and one very interesting *Head of Christ*, now at Berlin. One of his most famous Madonnas, given in our illustration and generally known as *La Vierge au Donateur*, is in the Louvre. It is a rather small picture, only two feet square, but the beauty of the colour, and the exquisitely fine elaborate workmanship make it particularly interesting. The landscape background is a new feature in art. Sometimes, from the name of the donor, it is known as *The Virgin and Child and Chancellor Rollin* (see p. 140).

1441

Virgin
and Donor
in the
Louvre

Jan van Eyck has been called the "father of landscape painting," and we wonder as we look at this picture how such a passion for colour can have been developed under the sombre skies of his native land. There may be something in the suggestion that proximity to the sea explains the wonder. The mists from the sea and the banking up of clouds draw the richest tints from the setting sun. The van Eycks therefore

in their gabled city of Bruges, and Turner from the London streets, could see colours as rich as any that float above the Adriatic. Some critics have therefore conceded to the northern schools of Flanders and Holland and England the right to claim an honourable affinity with the incomparable Venetians.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

In the National Gallery, No. 222, *A Man's Portrait*, may possibly be a portrait of Jan himself. The *Portraits of Jean Arnolfini and Jeanne de Chenany his wife* (No. 186) is one of his greatest pictures. It shows us two actually known Flemish burghers, persons no doubt of some importance in Bruges. The unrelaxing seriousness of both faces and the solemn attitude have suggested that this is the betrothal contract of a sister-in-law of Jan's; his own face too appears in the mirror. With what wonderful ingenuity the whole picture has been created; we accept it without hesitation as true to life. And then, if we begin to scrutinize, the "art" of the painter will reveal itself. The green robe trimmed with fur, and contrasting with the red chair, gives immediate pleasure; even more cunningly devised are those points of colour to the left, the three oranges on the table, and the apple on the window sill. Notice especially the manipulation of the light; how from that one side window it falls upon both faces, and lights up every bright object in the room: the oranges, the brass chandelier, the glittering thread inwoven with the embroidery on the belt and sleeves of the lady. Observe the purpose served by that concave mirror which catches the light from an open door somewhere outside the picture. Even the red clogs, thrown up so skilfully into relief against the red chair, are themselves brightened by a tiny row of beads. The lighter pair of clogs to the left and the curly-haired dog also play their part in the scheme. Even the hands, exquisitely drawn, serve as points of light. The more the picture is studied the more conscious do we become of the premeditated care with which every smallest detail has been brought into subordination to the general effect. Here is a master-hand guided by a master-brain. In the works of less gifted Flemings the details often become oppressive through failure to give a sense of unity such as has been achieved here.

This is one of our most valuable pictures, and about its authenticity there can be no doubt. Written on the wall are the words "Johannes de Eyck fuit hic," and the date 1434 is below.

Almost contemporary with Jan van Eyck, and in some ways a rival, was Roger van der Weyden of Brussels. He was born ^{Roger van der Weyden,} probably at Tournai in 1399 or 1400; and in 1432 (the year of *The Mystic Lamb*) his name is entered in the Guild of S. Luke in that city as a "master". Shortly afterwards he seems to have removed to Brussels where he was appointed by the magistrates of the city to decorate their Hall of Justice. But this piece of work is lost. ¹⁴⁰⁰⁻¹⁴⁶⁴

In 1449 he went to Italy, and visited Milan, Ferrara, Rome, ^{Journey to Italy, 1449} and probably Florence. We like to think of him as another pupil learning the secrets of his art from Masaccio's wonderful frescoes in the Carmine church. He certainly gained much from that visit.

Being a really great and original painter, van der Weyden was able to benefit from his study of the Italians without losing his own individuality. It was on his return from Italy that his best works were produced. They are without exception religious; and he shows a depth and fervour of devotion which are not to be found in the pictures of the van Eycks or their immediate followers. He is the founder of that class of "devout" picture which formed the subject of Michelangelo's talk with Vittoria Colonna (p. 85).

His Flemish truthfulness to nature led him to give great ^{His pathos} prominence to every outward detail of the sufferings of Christ and of the martyrs. He seems to see the pain of the gospel story, the "sword" which pierced through the heart of the Virgin mother, far more clearly than the joy announced by the angels. Pathos, we might almost call it a melodramatic pathos, is the prevailing note in all his work. But he was also a powerful artist. He painted many subjects after Italian models, such as the Adoration of the Magi, the Entombment of Christ, the Crucifixion, the Last Judgment; and thus established "art-conventions" which proved valuable in the

training of the many pupils who gathered round him. As a colourist he ranks below the van Eycks, but he holds an honourable position between those mighty pioneers and his own distinguished pupil, Hans Memlinc.

Pietà at
Berlin

The number of pictures in various continental galleries attributed to van der Weyden is very large. Berlin possesses several of the best authenticated works. The mere name of one altar-piece, *The Joys and Sorrows of our Lady of Pity*, seems to prove its authorship. It is a triptych, and we give in our illustration its central panel, a *Pietà*, rendered with tragic intensity. Notice the figure of the emaciated Christ, the beautiful refined features, and the pale forehead flecked with drops of blood from the piercing of the thorny crown. The attitude of the Mother is full of pathos, her hands clasped tight about his body, and her head bent downward to kiss the dead face. S. Peter, to the right, lays a fatherly hand on her hair. S. John, to the left, his face contracted with grief, stretches out both hands towards her as though to remonstrate and protect. Behind, through the open archway, the peaceful landscape of river, woods, and hills fades away into immense distance. In detail less exact than the van Eycks, van der Weyden's power of rendering aerial perspective was superior. His figures too are all graceful, and the faces are noble. We feel that he has learned restraint and dignity from the Italians without losing one jot of the emotional intensity which marks Flemish religious art.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

In our Gallery we have an interesting *Entombment* (No. 664) which was once ascribed to van der Weyden. It is painted in tempera, and on "unprimed" linen, that is without the first coating of paint which it is usual to lay on; hence that dull pale effect which is such a contrast to the brilliant oils of van Eyck in the neighbouring picture of *Jean Arnolfini*. This *Entombment* is now attributed to Dierick Bouts; we can only say that in most pictures by Bouts the colouring is extremely brilliant, and here we have to the full the *sentiment* which characterizes the genuine work of van der Weyden.

The spectator very soon feels that the aim of the painter



THE VIRGIN AND DONOR

JAN VAN EYCK

London, Paris
Nov. 6, 1477.



THE MOURNING FOR CHRIST

ROGER VAN DER WEYDEN

Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin

is to express emotion rather than to produce an artistic and pleasurable effect. But the instinctive love of *form* betrays itself in the admirable grouping of the figures. Follow the line of the heads, and notice the graceful curves described. The colours, though pale, have been chosen and contrasted with a seeing eye. The sage green throws up the red of the tall standing figure, which is probably S. John. The blue and green combined in the dress of the Virgin and again in the bent figure at the end of the tomb, are very effective. This figure, from a certain air of world-wisdom and masterfulness in the face, may perhaps be meant for Joseph of Arimathea. The Magdalene in the foreground is particularly graceful, and note again the green lining to her white cloak, and the pale red sleeve. The soft, cool background with the feathery trees gives a tranquillizing setting to the painful scene; it restores the balance, and brings the utterance of an emotion, which might have erred in violence, within the controlling bounds of moderation.

In Nos. 711 and 712 we again see characteristic work. The tears, the drops of blood, the whole accentuation of physical pain, are the features which have led German critics to give to van der Weyden the name of "der Pathetiker" (the pathetic one). His influence on the development of painting, not only in Flanders, but also in Germany and Italy was great.

CHAPTER XVI

MEMLINC AND THE LATER FLEMISH PAINTERS

WE now reach the best-loved painter of the Netherlands, Hans Memlinc. Yet, until quite recently, there was no trustworthy knowledge of either his life or his works. The patient industry of modern investigation has at last rectified the errors which had for so long disguised his personality. To Mr. W. H. James Weale, explorer and happy discoverer in the regions of Flemish art, we owe our latest incontrovertible information.

Born
probably,
1435-1440

We learn from him that the date of Memlinc's birth is still unknown, but the date of his death in 1494 is proved by an extract from a Flemish diary.

Settled in
Bruges,
1467?

It is thought that he was born in Germany, but his work is reckoned as belonging to the Flemish School. He probably, however, began his art-training under some German painter of Mainz or Cologne, and Mr. Weale does not think that he arrived in Bruges before 1467. In that case, already a man of over thirty, he cannot have been a pupil of van der Weyden in the strict sense of the term. Vasari, however, and another Italian who knew and admired his work both tell us that he was; so the truth on this point is as yet undecided. That his work betrays the influence of van der Weyden rather than that of the van Eycks, may be the true explanation of Vasari's statement. And a great many clearly authenticated dates now prove that Memlinc made Bruges his home between 1470 and 1494. There he married, there he bought and inhabited a substantial house in one of the main streets, and there he painted most of the works which are now known to be indisputably his.

During the days of the great Dukes of Burgundy, Bruges, like Venice, was a city of palaces; her merchants were princes, and fine works of art adorned most of the principal buildings. Among them none were more highly valued than the pictures of Memlinc. But after the death of Charles the Bold (1477), when the Netherlands passed by marriage to the House of Austria, a period of decline set in. Antwerp became the chief centre of foreign trade, and the powerful sovereigns of Austria and Spain soon denuded the forsaken city of Bruges of its best art-treasures. Only six of Memlinc's pictures now remain there: others have found their way into the various galleries of Europe.

One of the most wonderful—originally painted for a church in Bruges—is now in Munich, and is known there by the name of *The Seven Joys of Mary*. As the central subject is the Adoration of the Magi, Mr. Weale regards as more appropriate the alternative title of *Christ the Light of the World*. This picture represents a panorama of various scenes, and cannot be regarded as artistically a success; the first impression made by it being one of bewilderment. When inspected closely we find that scene after scene is put before us of the whole narrative from the Nativity to the Ascension. Not, however, in separate compartments, each a complete picture; but in nooks and groves, and bye-lanes, wrought into the face of the landscape by fantastic ingenuity. This was a favourite device with very early painters; they produced a kind of stationary “cinematograph,” very curious and interesting to study, but failing entirely in pictorial unity. In this case, it is the extraordinary brilliance and delicacy of the colouring which makes the picture in its own way a masterpiece.

Of all Memlinc's works perhaps the most famous is the reliquary of S. Ursula in S. John's Hospital at Bruges. This is a large box, or casket, in which some bones of the saint are supposed to be enclosed. It is made of oak richly carved in arches and pinnacles to simulate a Gothic building, and looks something like a little church as it stands on the revolving table which enables visitors to inspect closely, one after another, the

wonderful paintings with which it is covered. On each side, framed within carved arches, are three pictures, and at each end is a taller and narrower picture; eight in all. On each side of the sloping roof are three painted medallions. To facilitate our study a magnifying glass is provided, and the nearer we look the greater is our admiration.

Scenes
from the
legend

Our illustration shows two of the scenes painted on this reliquary; the first of the series depicts the arrival of Ursula and her maidens in Cologne, the first stage of their pilgrimage to Rome. The princess, her long train held up by one of her companions, is stepping out of the large ship which occupies the foreground. In the background we see Cologne with its cathedral, and the familiar tower of S. Martin's Church.

The next picture shows the maidens at Basle and the beginning of their miraculous passage of the Alps. The third shows their reception by the Pope at Rome. On the reverse side of the casket we see the return voyage from Basle, which is followed by the massacre of the virgins at Cologne. Lastly *The Death of S. Ursula*, shown in our second illustration, concludes the series. A good set of engravings, coloured after the originals, may be seen in the British Museum.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

In our Gallery we have a genuine picture by Memlinc, *The Virgin and Infant Christ, Enthroned, in a Garden* (No. 686), but there is no authentic knowledge as to when or for whom it was painted. It is not one of his best, but gives an idea of his style and the purity of his colours. It has the fault which appears in nearly all early Flemish pictures, a lack of unity. Each of the five figures before us seems to be absolutely alone, and quite unconscious of the occupations of the others. The Virgin, with her Child on her lap, is absorbed in a book; the Child seems to be unaware of the music played by the angel, who kneels beside him lost in a private dream. The donor kneels in prayer, but his glance is directed outwards; and S. George holds his banner and slays his dragon with an almost Giorgionesque dreaminess in his face. Yet how interesting are the details; each figure has its own charm, especially that of S. George, and in the background the distant miniature



S. URSULA DEPARTS FROM COLOGNE

HANS MEMLING

S. Jean's Hospital, Bruges



THE DEATH OF S. URSULA

HANS MEMLING

S. Jean's Hospital, Bruges

landscapes are very sweet. That exquisite ship on the left is exactly of the same pattern as those in which S. Ursula and her maidens sailed miraculously across Europe.

But the really lovely example of Memlinc's art is a small picture in the Salting collection (No. 2594) in room XV. This is described as a portrait of the Duke of Cleves. Here we have a quite pleasant, almost beautiful face, framed in golden-brown hair, and animated by a pair of clear honest eyes. The hands joined in prayer are exquisitely delicate, and every detail is worth study. The open illuminated Book of Hours is in itself a feast of colour; and the rings on thumb and finger, and the neck-chain are all realistically finished. Indeed the painting of the beautiful pearl pendant is so minutely faithful that we may almost feel that we have held it in our hand. And how rich and pure is that ruby line of the waistcoat, its delightfulness actually enhanced by the painter's refusing to grant us more! The two slashes of white in the black sleeves together with the narrow line of white at the throat introduce a freshness as of youth into the whole quiet, devotional theme. Fortunate to be the possessor of such a gem; more fortunate to have the generosity to leave it to the nation.

To estimate the value of Memlinc's work we cannot do better than quote some of the sympathetic appreciation by Mr. Mr. Weale in his *Hans Memlinc* in the "Great Masters" Series : Weale's criticism

"Taken collectively, the works produced by the masters of the Early Netherlandish School compare favourably with those of other countries. Hubert van Eyck's masterpiece, 'The Adoration of the Lamb,' has never been surpassed. . . . Though Memlinc never produced anything equal to this marvellous work, he certainly proved himself superior to all the other painters of the school. John van Eyck, it is true, surpassed him in technical execution. . . . John van Eyck saw with his eyes, Memlinc with his soul. John studied, copied, and reproduced with marvellous accuracy the models he had before him. Memlinc doubtless studied and copied, but he did more, he meditated and reflected; his whole soul went into his

work, and he idealised and glorified, and, so to say, transfigured the models he had before him. . . . His pictures show, in the manner of their conception and idealisation, a real progress; and many of the subjects he represented have never been so delicately and delightfully expressed by any other painter, with the exception, perhaps, of Fra Angelico. As compared with the other masters of the Netherlandish School, he is the most poetical and the most musical; many of his pictures are perfect little gems."¹

Gheeraert
David,
1460?-1523

Another most interesting early Flemish painter, recovered from oblivion by Mr. Weale, is Gheeraert David of Bruges. His birthplace was in Holland, but the date of his birth is not yet positively known. It is proved, however, from entries in the register of the Guild of S. Luke that he was admitted to that society as a master-painter in January, 1484, having settled in Bruges the previous year. His paintings are not numerous, but they are full of a rare charm. It is felt strongly by those capable of judging that he must have visited Italy—probably both Venice and Florence, for we find in his figures more grace and freedom than in those of Memlinc. There is the same faithfulness in detail, the same Flemish richness of colour, but an added beauty and mystery which speak of Italian influence. He cannot be called a painter of the Renaissance, but he has caught some of the new artistic fervour; on the other hand all his pictures breathe the old reverent spirit of mediæval piety, and he "sees with his soul" quite as unmistakably as van der Weyden or Memlinc. Some find traces in his work of the "mystic" and intimate treatment of sacred subjects which marks the School of Cologne (see p. 171) and consider that he owes a debt to Germany as well as to Italy. One of his loveliest pictures is a *Virgin and Child with Saints*, now in the museum at Rouen. It was painted as a gift to one of the convents in Bruges, and shows the Mother and Child surrounded by angels and a company of virgin saints; a bright and tranquil scene of bliss. It is a good example of the "Paradise picture" which was such a favourite in Germany (p. 171).

Picture at
Rouen

¹ *Hans Memlinc* (pp. 79-80).

Our own *Canon and His Patron Saints* (No. 1045) is a beautiful example of David's work. It needs only to be seen to be appreciated. Mention has already been made (p. 34) of the beautiful *Marriage of S. Catherine* (No. 1432). We may notice here that the "enclosed garden" which forms the background in this picture is closely allied in conception with the "Rose-hedge" which forms so frequent a setting to German Madonnas.

Following Memlinc and David, and entirely unlike them, are two well-known painters, Quinten Massys and Mabuse. Quinten Massys was the founder of the School of Antwerp, and he holds a prominent place in the development of Flemish art, because he deliberately formed his style on that of Italy. Professor Wauters, in his book on *The Flemish School of Painting*, writes of him thus:—

"Matsys was the first in Flanders who understood that, in painting, the details are of secondary importance, and must be subordinate to the general effect; he was the first to practise the great law of unity. He was the creator of the School of Antwerp, and announced its splendour; and he will remain the glorious link between Van Eyck and Memling on the one hand, and Rubens and Jordaens on the other."¹

The works of Massys are not very numerous, and we are fortunate enough to possess one (No. 295) which is a replica of the original picture in the museum at Antwerp. We can see at once in these two heads of the *Salvator Mundi* and the Virgin Mary how different is his style from that of Memlinc. There is something very attractive in these dignified and beautiful faces, but it is an attractiveness achieved by some loss of strength. There is a hint in them of what might be called prettiness, and when that appears we know that a decline in art has begun. The "ideal beauty" of the Italian artists of the best period is essentially spiritual; it is a quality born of the imagination, and communicating itself to us through a heightened purity of expression. But here the features have

¹ *The Flemish School of Painting*, translated by Mrs. Henry Rossel (p. 104).

been softened, a rosier tint given to the cheeks and lips, and the result is a surface beauty which does not really move us. These two wear their beauty consciously, like an ornament; but the faces of such an artist, as for instance Luini, seem, on the contrary, to be transparent, permitting us to look through them at the higher beauty which lies beneath.

Yet as a link between the archaic work of the fifteenth century and the complete modernity and exuberance of Rubens the work of Massys holds an important position.

Mabuse,
1470?-1541

John Gossart of Mabuse (a town in Hainault) is commonly known by the single name, Mabuse. Though generously endowed by nature, he too fell under the influence of the Italians, and in the end lost all power of individual insight. His early work is good, and England is fortunate in possessing a very fine *Adoration of the Kings*¹ at Castle Howard; and an interesting portrait group, *The Children of Christian II. of Denmark*, at Hampton Court.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

We have, too, in the National Gallery an excellent portrait from his hand—nameless, but more easily to be remembered if we christen it "The Man in Church" (No. 656).² This picture has all the excellencies of the Flemish School. Notice the chiaroscuro in the manifold ruching of the grey sleeve; and even in the placing—and spacing—of the two beautiful hands against the dark coat. The white line of the cuffs, and the open shirt front are delightful, and the red rosary gives us the one necessary touch of colour. The simple goodness of the face is remarkable; though not rapt away in prayer, like a S. Francis (that for our friend here would be impossible), yet there is a quiet, straightforward determination to perform his religious duties which is very engaging; a kind and lovable human being looks out at us through those honest grey eyes.

After Massys and Mabuse comes a period of rapid deterioration in Flemish art. The sixteenth century painters of Antwerp were in all essentials mere copyists of the Italians; they are known as the "Romanists". Without scruple we may pass them over, and turn our attention to the most celebrated of all the painters of Flanders, to Peter Paul Rubens.

¹ This is now in the National Gallery (No. 2790).

² This picture is now named "The Man with a Rosary".

CHAPTER XVII

RUBENS

IT was in Antwerp under Quinten Massys that early Flemish art had reached its apparent zenith. The old harshness had disappeared, and a cultivated appreciation of beautiful forms had been introduced from Italy. The minute finish bestowed on isolated details had given place to a large harmonious treatment of a picture as a whole. But the change, not being due to natural development, was in reality an affectation and a mannerism. It destroyed the sturdy northern growth upon which it was grafted, and with Massys and Mabuse the period of decline began.

It was also in Antwerp that the great revival under Rubens had its birth. Mabuse had died in 1532, and some thirty years later the Netherlands entered on that fierce war with Spain which was one of the finest dramatic spectacles of the fifteenth century. A group of small, loosely knit subject provinces had challenged the suzerain state, and emerged from the life-and-death struggle victorious. True, Spain also, by astute diplomacy won a partial success. By the Union of Utrecht in 1579 the irreconcilable northern provinces broke from their confederates and asserted their independence; they became the United Provinces of Holland. But the southerners made a compromise with their sovereign: at heart the majority of them were good Catholics, and on receiving assurances that their political rights would be respected, they returned to their former allegiance to Spain. They were treated after this with extraordinary favour, and received the flattering name of the "obedient provinces".

Revolt of
the Nether-
lands,
1566-1578

But in simple truth they had, like Jacob, sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. They had been on the point of becoming a nation; they returned to a state of tutelage, and exchanged the spirit of patriotism for one of fawning acquiescence. Some measure of revived commercial prosperity followed, and Spanish Flanders resumed—we can believe with a feverish zest—its life of material luxury.

Birth of
Rubens,
1577

It was on the flow of this generous tide that in 1577 Peter Paul Rubens was born. His father, a member of a good burgher family in Antwerp, was at this time in Germany, where he had sought refuge as a Protestant from the religious dissensions at home. In the small town of Siegen in Westphalia his famous son was born. Ten years later, on the death of the elder Rubens, his widow returned with her family to Flanders. She had rejoined the Church of Rome, and on her arrival in Antwerp sent her two boys to a school conducted by Jesuits, where they received a good classical education. The elder, Philip, afterwards became a doctor of law, and gained some reputation as a man of letters; but Peter Paul showed a strong liking for the life of a painter. His mother yielded at last reluctantly to his wishes.

Return to
Antwerp,
1537

Apprentice-
ship, 1791

His training began with a relative who had some facility in landscape painting. But the young Rubens preferred figures, and soon passed on to the studio of Adam van Noort, a rough-mannered but capable master. After four years with van Noort, Rubens met with a master more to his liking, Otto van Veen (1558-1629), who had studied in Italy, and was a scholar and a gentleman. He was not a great painter, but he instructed Rubens in the canons of classical art, and no doubt fostered that natural bent for decoration which so often tempted him to sacrifice truth to nature for the sake of an imposing general effect. At twenty-one (1798) Rubens was admitted as a master of the painting-guild of S. Luke, and recognized in Antwerp as an artist of promise.

New
governors
of the
Nether-
lands, 1599

The following year (1599) a new reign began in the Netherlands. Philip II. of Spain, just before his death in 1598, had given his daughter Isabella in marriage to the Archduke Albert of Austria, and had granted to them jointly the sovereignty of

the Netherlands. It was a time of rejoicing and hope, and no doubt Rubens played a prominent part in designing the public decorations which were entrusted to his master, van Veen. It is also more than probable that he was introduced to the royal couple and recommended to their patronage.

At this time Rubens was twenty-three, tall, well-built, and with a handsome face; the features, as we can see, are finely cut, and the fair hair and soft large eyes give to the whole appearance an air of distinction. His mind was cultivated, his manners agreeable, and he spoke and wrote in many tongues; at the same time he seems to have understood the value of reticence in speech (his letters at least showing no signs of self-disclosure), and he was possessed of that gift, so attractively serviceable to persons of high rank, the power to immortalize them in art. We are not surprised to learn that he was soon in the employ of a princely patron.

In 1600 Rubens went to Italy and entered the service of the reigning Duke of Mantua. We may remember that Titian had painted many pictures for a predecessor.

Appearance
of Rubens

Sojourn in
Italy, 1600
1608

It is not known in what manner Rubens and his patron first met, but for eight years the bond between them was maintained. He frequently obtained leave of absence, and visited all the famous centres of art in Italy. He was much in Venice, and fell under the spell of Titian and Veronese, the great colourists.

In 1603 he was sent to Spain in charge of some pictures intended as a present for King Philip III. He writes from Madrid with unusual vigour of expression to the duke's secretary at Mantua, declaring that he has no wish to make acquaintance with any of the Spanish painters of the day: "knowing the incredible incompetency and indolence of these painters, whose manner besides—and this is important—differs so completely from my own. Heaven preserve me from resembling them in any way." But he admired greatly the Titians and Raphaels which adorned the king's galleries.

On his return to Italy Rubens paid at least three visits to Rome, and was for some time in Genoa. Apparently content with his life in Italy, he perhaps might have lingered there too

long for the preservation of his individuality had not the dangerous illness of his mother recalled him to Antwerp.

Death of
his mother,
1608 He arrived there too late to see her alive; and was so much shaken by her loss that for a time he lived in complete seclusion. When ready to face life again, his intention seems to have been to return to the Duke of Mantua; but the Archduke Albert and his wife, who recognized his worth and were anxious to retain him in Flanders, now offered him the post of court-painter.

Second
period of
his life,
1608-1622 Rubens was now thirty-one. The shock which had broken up his home, had also emancipated him from the dominating influence of an alien form of art. He had learned from it all that he needed for the stimulating of his own genius, and now, once more on native soil, he seems to have found himself. A strenuous and very prolific period of art production began.

Marriage
with
Isabella
Brant, 1609 In 1609 he married Isabella Brant, and in the following year bought a large house and garden in Antwerp which continued to be his home for over twenty years. This house was entirely remodelled to make it suitable for a painting school as well as a private residence for himself and his family.

His studio Here Rubens was soon surrounded by pupils anxious to be trained in his studio, and he tells us that in 1611 he was obliged to refuse more than a hundred who applied for admission. Besides applications from students, Rubens was overwhelmed with commissions. A time of conflict with the neighbouring United Provinces was in 1609 brought to a close by the arrangement of a twelve years' truce. The civic authorities at once gave their attention to needed restorations in the great buildings of the city, and wished to employ the brush of Rubens. Wealthy private citizens were also anxious to present gifts of pictures to one or other of the great churches in thanksgiving for the return of peace. They too wished to engage the services of their famous townsman. Rubens was a first-rate man of business as well as an artist, and he met these various claims by a system of co-operation. His many pupils were trained to work under his direction and carry out his designs. Those who showed special aptitude, as for instance for drapery,



RUBENS AND HIS FIRST WIFE IN AN ARBOUR

RUBENS

Pinakothek, Munich (See p. 157)



CHILDREN CARRYING A GARLAND OF FRUIT

RUBENS

Pinakothek, Munich (See p. 157)

and landscape backgrounds or buildings, would be employed to execute these parts in many pictures. Some other pupil with another kind of gift would add the required animals to his companion's landscape. Another might perhaps be allowed to lay in the human figures. The master would then correct, improve, add the finishing touches which changed the work of the tyro into an impressive picture. The firm of "Rubens and Co." was thus able to undertake and execute an immense number of orders. There was no deception in the matter, and as a rule the work produced gave full satisfaction.

From a list of works offered for sale to an English collector we gain an insight into the business methods practised by Rubens.

LIST OF PICTURES IN MY HOUSE

A Prometheus bound . . . with an eagle who gnaws his liver. Original by my hand, eagle by Snyders				500 florins.
Leopards, painted from life, with Satyrs and Nymphs. Original by my hand, except a very beautiful landscape, done by a very distinguished artist in that style .				600 „
The Twelve Apostles and Christ, painted by my pupils after originals by my hand . . . they could all be retouched by my hand				500 „ each.
Achilles clothed as a woman, painted by my best pupil, and entirely retouched by me. A charming work, and full of many beautiful young girls				600 „

Several other items are included and faithfully described, a striking example of commercial candour. The "best pupil" was probably Van Dyck, whose style of work was so excellent that many a customer stipulated for his employment in the execution of an order.

This co-operative method of work led naturally to a different

Co-
operative
pictures

class of pictures from those in which the individuality of the painter expresses itself in every line and every tone of colour ; we do not perceive the living human personality, choosing and rejecting by an instinctive necessity which deepens while it narrows his art. These intimate delights are reserved for us in the pictures of a Fra Angelico, a Raphael, a Dürer, a Terborch. But in Rubens we feel the master mind victoriously commanding a whole troop of assistants ; like the conductor of an orchestra, one sweep of whose bâton gives the word, and crescendo or diminuendo gives back an obedient response. The many are subordinated to the will of one ; and in the case of this masterful painter every work that issued from his *Factory* is unmistakably *Rubenesque*.

For some dozen years this life of artistic activity was uninterruptedly pursued. Rubens was an early riser, a man of abstemious habits and unvarying industry. He sought relaxation in the pleasures of family life, and many are the fine pictures he has left us of wife and children, and even of the stately house and garden in which he spent these years of quiet. The pictures of this second or middle period are rated as more valuable than those of the first ; he had acquired a freedom of manner that was impossible during his subjection to the spirit of Italian art. But he had not attained the particular lightness and rapidity of touch, and the transparency of colour which in his later works are such a source of delight to the artist and connoisseur.

Third
period,
1622-1640

The fame of Rubens was not confined to the Netherlands. He received many orders from France ; notably a series of pictures in oil ordered by the queen-mother, Marie de Médicis. These latter were intended to adorn the Luxembourg Palace, and their subject was to be the history of the royal lady herself.

Journeys to
Paris, 1622-
1623

In 1622 Rubens visited Paris to take the necessary measurements for his work, and in 1623, taking with him the smaller finished panels, he made a long stay there. The queen-mother often watched him at work and learned to respect the man no less than she admired the artist. These pictures are

now arranged in a separate room in the Louvre, and are in a state of excellent preservation.

This visit to France had other consequences; it led to a radical change in the life of Rubens, most unfortunate in its bearing on his artistic production. His sagacity, tact, and extreme charm of manner made his society very congenial to the great. They saw in him a fit agent for diplomatic missions; and the man who had just reached the final and most splendid phase of his development as an artist was withdrawn from his studio and employed, unrelentingly, in the field of politics.

The time was one of anxiety and difficulty; to grasp its intricacies the curious student of history should read Mr. Rawson ^{European politics, 1624-1634} Gardiner's *Spanish Marriage*. In 1621 the Archduke Albert, Stadtholder of the Spanish Netherlands, had died, and the Archduchess Isabella and her ministers were anxious about the safety of their little State. Briefly the two great objects of her policy were to renew the peace with Holland, and to draw England into an alliance with Spain. Our king, James I., was entirely in favour of such an alliance, but owing to some mistakes made by his favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, the court of Spain hesitated.

Rubens first visited Holland, with the object of effecting a lasting peace. He knew Buckingham, and it was next decided (the Archduchess and Buckingham being agreed on this point) that Rubens should go in person to Spain to discover the real feelings of Philip IV. towards England. Two years previously Isabella Brant had died, and Rubens, a man of strong affec- ^{Death of Isabella Brant, 1626} tions, was glad to seek distraction from grief in the service of his sovereign lady.

In the summer of 1628, bearing with him a gift of eight ^{Sojourn in Spain, 1628-1629} pictures for Philip IV., he set out on his second mission to the Spanish court. The assassination of Buckingham in that year set Rubens free for a time from the strain of further diplomacy. This second visit to Madrid was full of varied interest; and, having been ennobled by the king, he was admitted to all the festivities of court life. But more interesting to the student of art is the meeting at Madrid of Rubens and

Velazquez. Its importance has been vividly conceived by Mr. Stevenson:—

Rubens
and
Velazquez

“Rubens, now fifty-two, and Velasquez thirty, painted together, travelled together, and talked together eight or nine months. . . . Pacheco says that Rubens was best pleased when he was in the company of Velasquez, and that he conceived a high esteem for the younger man’s talents as a painter. The two made several expeditions together; on one occasion they climbed the Sierras to take bird’s-eye view sketches of the Escorial. Can this illustrious commerce of the two great geniuses who represented realistic and decorative painting have been without influence on the younger?”¹

Rubens in
England,
1629

In May, 1629, Rubens went to England with friendly overtures from the King of Spain, which had been rendered possible by the death of the capricious Duke of Buckingham. Rubens accomplished this diplomatic mission with complete success, and also discussed painting with King Charles, who was by no means deficient in taste. Indeed he had already, as Prince of Wales, given an order for a *portrait of Rubens*, which now hangs in the Royal Gallery at Windsor. A further commission was given to decorate the ceiling of one of the great rooms in Whitehall Palace. It was not until 1635 that the panels painted for this were sent over to England, and with some difficulty fitted into their place in the ceiling. As a piece of decorative work in a florid style they are quite successful. During his eight months’ stay in England Rubens painted several pictures, among others *Peace and War* in our National Gallery.

Marriage
with
Helena
Fourment,
1636

On his return to Antwerp, in 1630, Rubens shrank from the solitude which awaited him in his old home. He determined to marry again, and chose a young and very beautiful girl, Helena Fourment, whose portrait he loved to paint. Just the one figure, in a different attitude, or a different dress, is a subject of which he never tired. And he also introduces her piquant face into many of his mythological or allegorical groups.

¹ *Portfolio Monograph on Rubens* (No. 35).



THE LAST COMMUNION OF S. FRANCIS

RUBENS

Museum, Antwerp

The later years of his life were spent at his beautiful country house called the "Château de Steen," which we can see in the large landscape in the National Gallery (No. 66). He was troubled with gout, but worked on diligently to the end, which came in the year 1640. Death of
Rubens,
1640

The number of pictures attributed to Rubens and his collaborators is so immense that in every gallery in Europe some of them are to be found. In Munich alone there are ninety, and it is there that his varied powers are best displayed. In order to form a true estimate of his genius a visit to Munich is indispensable. Among the pictures there, one of the most interesting is the portrait of himself and his first wife which we give in our illustration. It was painted in 1609 or 1610 and so belongs to the early years of his second manner. Authentic examples of his first manner are very rare. From the same gallery we have chosen our second illustration, generally known as *The Garland of Fruit*. It belongs to a rather later period (1615-1618) than the portrait group, and shows Rubens at his best. The fruit was painted by Snyders—an assistant renowned for his studies of still life,—but it was Rubens himself who painted the merry group of children, as winsome in their naturalness as any *putti* of Correggio (see p. 128). One at least, the centre one of the three heads at the back, is said to be a child of his own. Rich in colour, palpitating with life, the picture is a delight to all who look on it. In execution it is specially fine. The great authority on Rubens, Max Rooses, makes this final comment: "Rubens s'est contenté d'être vrai et y a gagné". (Rubens has been content to be true, and has gained by it.) See our illustrations, p. 152. Pictures in
Munich

In Antwerp and other towns in Belgium many of his best works still remain. *The Descent from the Cross* in Antwerp Cathedral is generally reckoned as his masterpiece. But some close and sympathetic students of the work of Rubens regard *The Last Communion of S. Francis* in the museum of that town as the most perfectly beautiful, both in sentiment and treatment, of all his religious pictures. One of his favourite subjects was the Adoration of the Magi. He treated it In Antwerp

frequently, always with some variation of grouping and colour ; and representing the scene—as he usually does—at night, he he is able to introduce very striking effects of contrasted light and shade. The best of his many “Adorations” is considered to be the one painted in 1619 for the church of S. John at Malines, where it now hangs.

In Madrid Many of his latest pictures are in Madrid, most of them large canvases illustrating stories from the classics. One, the *Judgment of Paris*, much resembles the version of it in our Gallery, but is considered to be a finer work. A subject of quite a different class is his *Dance of Peasants*, a picture which is full of life and motion, a great favourite with connoisseurs.

In London, Of the many examples in the National Gallery perhaps the the *Chapeau de Poil* (No. 852) is the most famous. It is the portrait of an elder sister of Helena Fourment, Rubens having been intimately acquainted with the family for many years before his second marriage. It is thought to be almost entirely by his own hand.

The *Judgment of Paris* Of the other pictures in this collection, perhaps the most genuinely pleasing is the *Judgment of Paris*. It is painted in what one critic has called “a chastened mood,” and so the figures are fairly graceful, and they are graceful in a manner which is restful to the eye. The young shepherd Paris, with Mercury beside him, sits to the right, holding the apple of discord which is to be awarded to the “fairest”; Juno, with her peacock, turns her back on us; Venus, with fair tresses and a look of victory on her face, is stepping forward towards the judge; Minerva stands apart to the left. The richness of colour, the landscape, the light and air introduced into the picture produce an exhilarating sense of vitality and beauty.

But to those who can feel the splendour of triumphant painting—as distinct from the subject rendered—the pictures numbered 46 and 853 will make a far stronger appeal. The former, *Peace and War*, should be seen, if possible, in an afternoon light which gives a peculiar softness to the colours and the outlines of the figures. The beautiful back and the

shapely leg of the figure on the left described as "Wealth" make many of us feel indignant that Rubens should so gratuitously have chosen coarser types in most of his pictures.

The Triumph of Silenus, horrible in subject, is so magnificently powerful as a picture that it becomes at times enthralling. Look at that panting man who can hardly resist the weight of the odious monster he is trying to support, and the puffed cheeks of the piping shepherd. They are both so clamorously alive. Then the splendid, well-balanced pageant of colour has a rhythmic force which compels us to stand and gaze. Notice the dark flesh of the supporting man and the fair flesh of the girl; the two heads dimly glowing under the torch-light, and the two exquisite white children in the right-hand corner. The picture lays upon us an irresistible spell; we recognize that the man who painted it was a genius.

The two landscapes in this room (Nos. 66 and 157) are of great interest, as they show that Rubens was sensitive to the charm of Nature, and his treatment differs entirely from that of the artists who preceded him. Instead of one general tone throughout the picture, the shadows are sharply defined, and the strong patches of light make us feel the presence of sunshine. Here he treats landscape as having a pictorial value of its own (a modern conception) instead of serving merely as a background to figures.

In the history of art, Rubens counts as one of its mightiest creative forces. He marks an epoch, he effected a revolution. We may notice first that his innovations differ from those of the Italian Renaissance masters because he claimed for the painter an unlimited range of subjects. The Italians, on escaping from ecclesiastical restrictions, reverted to the classic code of conventions. To their unerring taste it was impossible to separate artistic beauty from the control of order and balance. The recovered treasures of the ancient world were their models because they embodied the perfect forms already worshipped by the imagination. Even Leonardo, who went direct to Nature, seems never to have conceived of beauty as existing apart from symmetry and the restraint of some fundamental law.

But Rubens was a more startling innovator, because he broke loose from law altogether; the whole world was his province, and he let his imagination play riotously over every conceivable problem of pictorial representation. He refused to classify the objects of sight, labelling some as suitable, and others as unsuitable for reproduction in art. But he kept to one old Italian tradition, that the finished effect should be decorative.

Besides increasing the area to be explored by the artist, Rubens also adopted new ways of regarding his chosen subject. He recognized, more than any before him, the modification of form and colour produced by distance. He stood far away from his canvas so as to bring the various parts of his picture into their true space relations; he lowered his colours as the objects retreated further from the eye, so as to render their correct values. In order to feel the power of his pictures we must study them from a distance.

Another great innovation was his rejection of nearly all the accepted canons of composition, and his groups look as natural as if caught in perfect unconsciousness in the camera of some hidden passer-by. And during his later period he developed a freedom in the use of the brush and a novel distribution of his paint which resulted in inimitably splendid effects.

His latest practice was to lay in very thin transparent shadows, while accentuating his high lights with solid touches. And he gained his flowing gradations of colour by laying each tone in its place, one beside the other, and then working across the adjoining edges with a fine brush which drew them softly together.

And yet despite the debt owed to Rubens as a reformer, and the astounding force displayed in his work, there is nearly always something in it which repels. There is a coarseness which it is not easy to tolerate. To answer, as do some critics, that his colour, his light, his rendering of the tints of flesh redeem his contempt for line is only a partial apology. To retort, as others do, that the types of human form he represents must have appeared beautiful to Rubens is to suggest that beauty is a matter of personal taste. We are justified in maintaining that

beauty belongs to that class of noble qualities which in their essence are not subject to change. Had there been no classic traditions we should still know the likeness of a perfect human form—well knit and firm, it should seem poised for motion, suggesting the lithe grace of the bird rather than the ponderous volume of the quadruped. “In form and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a God! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!”

These words content us: Hamlet had seen the dignity of man and the grace of woman, both of which have their source in obedience to law. But Rubens missed this delicate vision of freedom rooted in restraint; he confused energy with violence; and the uncouth exuberance of his creations robs them of beauty. He had not learned that the subtlest and most precious of all the gifts bestowed upon the artist is the gift of moderation.

CHAPTER XVIII

VAN DYCK

Born 1599

ANTHONY VAN DYCK, born in 1599 in Antwerp, was one of a large family. His father was a rich Flemish merchant, and the boy from his youth was surrounded by all that conduces to comfort and refinement. He must have shown his taste for art early; for in 1609, when only ten years of age, his name appears on a list of pupils in the studio of

Trained by
van Balen

van Balen. This van Balen was highly esteemed as a master, and the boy was well trained. The influence of Rubens must also have been at work on him from the first. In 1610 he must have seen Rubens' *Elevation of the Cross* unveiled in the Cathedral, and in 1612 he must have seen the greater work, his *Descent from the Cross*. All Antwerp gloried in these pictures, and the boy Van Dyck was no doubt fired by the sight of them to cherish dreams of a like renown for himself. Some writers say that in this year (1612) he entered the studio of Rubens; if so, it must have been obviously as a pupil. Others are of opinion that Van Dyck was never his pupil in the ordinary sense. It is known that he was admitted as a master-painter to the guild of S. Luke in 1618, an unusual honour at the early age of nineteen. According to the second theory, Van Dyck was therefore a recognized master before his relations with Rubens began. In this case he would be engaged, as so many others were, in the character of a fully competent assistant.

Admitted
to the
Guild of
S. Luke,
1618

Until 1621 he seems to have held this position, and among the many replicas of Rubens' pictures during these years, it is

sometimes difficult to decide whether they are painted by him at all, or entirely by Van Dyck. There are no well-known spirited biographies of the Antwerp painters, like those of Vasari,¹ to enable us to picture their daily life. We cannot tell whether the brilliant talents of the younger man were a source of pride or annoyance to his master. But the nature of Rubens seems to have been large and generous, and it is believed that every opportunity for the advancement of his assistant was encouraged. Van Dyck was of a different temperament; and his many portraits of himself betray a self-consciousness and a theatrical tendency to pose which suggest serious defects of character. Mr. Lionel Cust gives an acute analysis: "The portraits throughout life bear out the painter's character, such as can be learnt from his life and works. Van Dyck betrays a nervous and obstinate disposition. He is ambitious, quick to learn, appropriate and assimilate the ideas of others; never quite content with or confident in his own supreme genius for portrait-painting; indolent and luxurious in his life, but at the same time strongly individual, proud and sensitive; quick to feel a slight or take offence, and careless of giving offence to others. With such feminine traits in his character, Van Dyck presents a strong contrast to his master, Rubens, and his other Flemish friends and contemporaries. It was not likely that so uneasy a spirit would remain long in a position of inferiority or subordination."²

In the
studio of
Rubens,
1618-1620

Character
of Van
Dyck

It was through the patronage of an English lady, the Countess of Arundel, that Van Dyck was able to escape from the overshadowing greatness of his master, and to gain public notice for himself. He had a singular gift for portraiture, which Rubens urged him to develop, and when in 1620 the English countess arrived in Antwerp in order to have her portrait painted by Rubens, she saw much also of Van Dyck. One of her suite writes: "Van Dyck is always with Signor Rubens, and his works are beginning to be scarcely less esteemed than those of his master".

¹ Van Mander's *Lives of Painters* are not yet translated into English.

² *Van Dyck* in the "Great Masters" Series (p. 23).

Van Dyck
in England,
1620

A few months later Van Dyck was in England, painting the portraits of King James and his family, and apparently holding a recognized post at the court, as there are many records of the sums of money paid out to him from the royal exchequer. But the ambitious Van Dyck was not content to settle down at the age of twenty-one to the business of painting portraits, even of royal personages. He probably regarded Rubens as a rival; and it is certain that his great wish was to excel in the same department of painting. Large historical pictures, such as he had seen and worked on in the Rubens studio, had a fascination for him, and he wished to astonish the world with an original masterpiece. Italy, so he felt, was the only school for him. He must learn, as Rubens had done, at the feet of Titian, and then a like success would be assured. He seems at first to have asked the King of England for a short leave of absence, which was granted. But in the end, owing to his restless indecision of character, he started late and found it convenient to break his contract with the king altogether. We learn this from a later contract with King Charles, in which all past breaches of faith are condoned.

In Italy,
1621-1626

It is impossible to follow accurately Van Dyck's wanderings through Italy, but a very interesting record of the impressions he received is to be found in a sketch book which accompanied him. It is now in the Duke of Devonshire's collection at Chatsworth. His critical observations are very sound, and his unerring taste preserved him from falling under the power of the later *Eclectic* school of painters who were destroying originality in art. Van Dyck too was a borrower, but he borrowed with discrimination and courage. Titian he studied everywhere; not only in Venice, where he seems to have made a long stay, but in every town where a picture by him was to be found.

In Genoa

The town where Van Dyck stayed longest was Genoa; there he found friends and generous patrons, and made a great name for himself as an artist. He painted the portraits of many of the Genoese nobility with so much insight into character and such a freshness and energy of style that never in later life did he achieve better work. At one time there were in Genoa as many as ninety-nine paintings by "Signor Antonio," the grace-

ful name acquired by him during this educative Italian period. Those who wish to know Van Dyck at his best must follow him to Italy and inquire for the many pictures still to be found in Genoa, Turin and Florence. Just now (1912) we may see two of these in London, Lord Lucas having lent them to the National Gallery. *The Balbi Family*, a group of three children, is extraordinarily fine; richness of colour, simplicity of pose, together with the dignity of high breeding, combine in forming an impressive and beautiful picture.¹

On his return to Antwerp Van Dyck's rank as a painter was unquestioned. But there was hardly room in one town for two such giants as himself and Rubens. It will be remembered that in 1626 the wife of Rubens died, and he soon became a political agent for the court of the Netherlands. His absence was advantageous to Van Dyck, who for some years received many and important commissions. We are apt to think of him so exclusively as a portrait painter that it is hard to realize how much admirable work he has left of a different kind. Something like fifty pictures on sacred subjects, and about twenty on mythological subjects, are attributed to Van Dyck.

In most of them we can trace the guiding spirit of either Titian or Rubens; in many he has copied the designs of Rubens so closely that doubts have arisen as to which of the two men really painted them. But in two instances Van Dyck shows real originality. His great picture of *The Holy Trinity* which hangs in the Academy at Buda-Pesth is one, and his second triumph in sacred art is *The Repose in Egypt with a Dance of Angels*. This picture was a great favourite, and Van Dyck has repeated it frequently. The original probably is the one in the Uffizi at Florence. There is a good copy of it in the Art Gallery at Glasgow. Both these pictures, the *Trinity* and the *Repose*, rank as very important examples of Flemish art (see p. 167).

For some few years Van Dyck lived and worked in Antwerp. His house was far less pretentious than that of Rubens, but he

¹ Through the kindness of Lady Lucas this picture still remains on loan in the Gallery. It is now hung in an admirable position in Room XIV.

still seems to have pursued as an aim the surpassing of his former master in large decorative figure pictures. There are several very beautiful ones in the churches of Antwerp. He did not neglect portrait-painting, but, as is so often the case with men of genius, he desired chiefly to excel in a different line.

Portraits,
1626-1630

The portraits painted during this Antwerp period are remarkable by their simplicity: the whole interest is centred in the vivid truth to nature of the face, the dress of the sitter being generally black. The hands, too, most carefully interpreted, seem to be vibrating with life. When creating a portrait Van Dyck loses the hesitating search for inspiration which appears in his historical pictures. With a human face before him he could work with masterly strength and rapidity, and he had the happy art of seeing all that was best in it, so that he secured a pleasing likeness without any loss of truth. The sombreness of dress in these Antwerp portraits is probably due to the gloom cast over the court of the Netherlands by the death in 1621 of the Archduke Albert. His widow, while still performing her public duties, became an associate of the religious Order of "Poor Clares" and adopted their dress. She thus set a fashion which for a time modified the Flemish taste for bright colours. It was not long before she discovered Van Dyck's power and appointed him as court-painter. He made several portraits of her in the dark dress of her Order, and it is interesting to study the face of this strong intelligent ruler as portrayed by the two great painters of the Netherlands. Rubens always achieves a fine picture; but Van Dyck exhibits more insight into character, and so wins from us a more whole-hearted admiration.

Van Dyck
in England,
1632-1641

In 1632, soon after the return of Rubens to Antwerp, an invitation from England enabled Van Dyck to retire with dignity from further competition with his great rival. It was in 1629 that Charles I., a very able judge of paintings, seems for the first time to have "discovered" Van Dyck. He saw a picture by him which he admired, and an order was sent to Antwerp for a replica. Negotiations followed between the friends of



TRIPLE PORTRAIT OF CHARLES I

VAN DYCK

Windsor



THE REPOSE IN EGYPT

VAN DYCK

Corporation Art Gallery, Glasgow

(See p. 165)

Van Dyck and the king, and at last in 1632 the Flemish artist was offered and accepted the post of court-painter to Charles I. of England. He received a handsome salary, and in addition to this was soon overwhelmed with private commissions, so that he was able to keep up both a town house and a country house, and to live in a very luxurious manner.

To the next eight years belong that splendid series of Stuart Stuart portraits with which nearly all are familiar. Charles knighted portraits the new favourite; and Van Dyck's handsome appearance and courtly manners commended him to the English nobility. Every man of note and every beautiful lady wished to be painted by the accomplished Sir Anthony, and with an extraordinary degree of success he met these numerous claims. The king, his wife Henrietta Maria, the royal children, were painted frequently. We have them in single figures, and sometimes in pretty groups. Of the king perhaps the finest in England is the large equestrian portrait at Windsor.

Another peculiarly interesting picture is the triple portrait of Triple our illustration, also at Windsor. It is here perhaps more than portrait of Charles I. in any other portrait that Van Dyck has caught the look of melancholy foreboding which seems to predestinate him to a tragic fate. This picture was sent to the sculptor Bernini at Rome that he might make a bust from it. "Ecco, il volto funesto" (It is the face of a doomed man), were his words on first seeing it. When the bust reached England, it was placed in the grounds of a private house where the king and some of his courtiers went to see it. As they stood examining and admiring, a hawk flew overhead with a wounded partridge in its claws. Some of the blood of the partridge splashed down upon the neck of the bust, "where," as the tale continues, "it always remained without being wiped off". That bust was destroyed by a fire in Whitehall Palace in 1697, and the picture remained in the family of Bernini till 1803. It was then purchased by an Englishman, and passed in the end into the possession of George IV.

While Van Dyck, the alien from across the sea, was working in his studio on the banks of the Thames, how little could he Historical value of his portraits

understand the true meaning of his own destiny. A lover of fame, a lover of wealth, and a dissipated man of the world, he was at the same time a genius driven to accomplish his work. And the Muse of History made him her instrument and by his unconscious hand she wrote the chronicles of England's most heroic epoch. He knew nothing of the storm which was about to break, but he has left undying memorials of those engaged in it, the defenders of a lost cause. No printed volumes by Whig historians can degrade them while the canvases of Van Dyck remain to vindicate their honour. And no theories about all men being equal can be maintained in the presence of these seventeenth century aristocrats. There were goodly men in those days, and the gallant bearing of the Cavaliers proves by implication the fine quality of the men on the other side who overcame them. It is a period of history which still fascinates us, and Van Dyck's portraits are a determining factor in this fascination.

Nearly all the best portraits painted during his eight years' residence in England are still the property of the noble families whose ancestors sat to him.

Marriage
with Mary
Ruthven,
1640

Unfortunately Van Dyck grew rather careless in the time of prosperity and deputed too much of his work to assistants; we find therefore in later years a marked deterioration. His health suffered from his immoderate habits, and the paternal Charles thought a wife might serve to correct his irregularities. There was a gentle dowerless orphan of noble birth, called Mary Ruthven, among the queen's attendants; and the king arranged a marriage between her and Sir Anthony. Whether it proved happy or not we cannot know; all that is certain is that he painted a portrait of her to be seen in the Munich gallery, and that she bore him one child.

Death,
Dec., 1641

In 1641 Sir Anthony Van Dyck died in London. He was buried with great pomp in S. Paul's Cathedral, and a handsome monument marked the spot. But in the great fire of 1666 S. Paul's and all within it perished.

Contrast
with
Rubens

In contrasting Van Dyck with Rubens we should notice the virility of the one, and the feminine bias towards emotionalism

CHAPTER XIX

THE GERMAN SCHOOL AND HOLBEIN THE ELDER

VERY little is known about the first beginnings of the art of painting in Germany. In some parts of the country remains of old mural paintings have been found, which show that fresco was at one time employed for the decoration of churches. But the adoption of the Gothic style in architecture resulted in the shrinkage of wall-space; and then stained glass and panel pictures took the place of fresco work.

School of
Cologne

It is generally agreed that the true birth-place of German art was Cologne; that beautiful city which proudly dominates Germany's best-loved river, the Rhine. Here in the fourteenth century lived and worked several half-mythical artists, about whom it is not likely that we shall ever gain really full knowledge. Meister Wilhelm—or Wilhelm von Herle—was the father of the School, and is thought to have been living between 1358 and 1378; but modern criticism has robbed him of nearly all his pictures. The best known, a large altar-piece in Cologne Cathedral, called *The Life of Christ*, is now attributed to a pupil. This picture is characterized by a soft and dreamy beauty hardly to be expected from a northerner, and is in every way different from the realism which marks the Schools of Flanders.

In the Munich gallery is a *S. Veronica* (p. 172), which is still attributed to von Herle, and we have a replica of this in the National Gallery. The legend tells that as the Christ passed by bearing his cross Veronica wiped his brow, and received on her handkerchief the impress of his thorn-crowned face. Here too we notice the soft beauty of Veronica's features.

An interesting historical basis has been suggested for this love of beauty which marks the early Cologne School. In the fourteenth century, a time of war and confusion, there arose in the neighbourhood a band of peace-lovers, who called themselves "Brothers of the Free Spirit" and the "Friends of God". They did not withdraw from the Catholic Church, but formed within it a little society which set holiness above ceremonial. They were like the "Quietists" of later France, and the "Mystics" who are to be found in every religious community. "The Kingdom of God is within you" might have been their motto. The early Cologne artists were imbued with this mystic spirit, and they evolved a type of very sweet ideal loveliness for the holy persons depicted in their paintings. They evolved too a special class of pictures, known as "Paradise pictures," where the Madonna and Child in a garden full of flowers are shown as sharers in the happiness of the blessed. These differ from the "Madonna in the Rose Bower," because there was a note of intimacy in them which was soon lost when more orthodox conventions were introduced.¹

Greater than Wilhelm is the better authenticated Meister Stephan, or Stephan Lochner. He was a native of Constance, ^{Meister Stephan, cir. 1430-1451} but spent most of his life in Cologne, and several interesting works are acknowledged as being unmistakably his. The best known is the *Dom-bild* (Cathedral picture) now in one of the chapels of Cologne Cathedral. It is a triptych consisting of an *Adoration of the Magi* in the centre, with S. George in one wing and S. Ursula sheltering her many maidens in the other. ^{The Dom bild} It is painted in a peculiar kind of tempera which has much of the lustre and depth of oils; and the whole rendering of the scene is both dignified and beautiful. At one time the picture was attributed to Meister Wilhelm, but a short entry in the journal of Albert Dürer (1521) has corrected this error: "Item: I have paid two white pfennigs for the picture to be opened which Meister Steffan of Cöln has done".

Even more attractive than the great altar-piece is a small

¹ See Conway's *Early Flemish Artists* (chap. i.).

Madonna
in the Rose
Bower

picture in the Cologne museum known as *The Madonna in the Rose Bower*. Here we have an exquisite representation of this purely German conception. The wealth of flowers, the fruits, the glittering wings of the angels have a more than Italian charm. Here, under dark skies, all these lovely things are rare, and for that very reason are painted with an enhanced sense of their loveliness. The Queen of Heaven, gloriously crowned, is both regal and maternal; the apple in the hand of the sweetly serious Child reminds us

“Of Man’s first disobedience,”

which

“Brought death into the world, and all our woe”;

—the music issuing from those many angelic instruments gives assurance of the fairer Eden which the coming of Christ has prepared for redeemed mankind (see p. 10).

The
Meister von
Liesborn

Another interesting painter is the Master von Liesborn, generally classified as belonging to the “Westphalian School”. His great work was a *Crucifixion* painted about 1456 for the Benedictine Monastery of Liesborn near Münster. It consisted of many compartments, but when the monastery was suppressed by Napoleon in 1807 this altar-piece was broken up, and the different sections dispersed and sold. Some of them have found their way into our Gallery, and are full of interest and beauty.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

The *Annunciation* (No. 256) and *Presentation* (257) are extremely attractive. In the former every detail in the interior of the house where the Virgin sits is finished with the minute care of the Flemish School. Notice the carving of the *prie-dieu* chair and of the press; the bright steel clasps, the polished brass salver, the solid gold halo; the stained glass windows, and the coloured tiles. Yet there is a grace in both figures, and a suggestion of comeliness in the Virgin’s blushing face which we rarely find in the early pictures of the Flemings. We recognize the ideal type of beauty discovered by the “Friends of God”. No. 257 fully repays a close scrutiny; the arrangement of the colours and the grouping of the figures are



THE MADONNA IN THE ROSE BOWER

MEISTER STEPHAN

Munich, 1480



S. VERONICA

SCHOOL OF COLOGNE

National Gallery, London

See p. 170

admirable. There is much expression in the faces, and great variety.

Besides the Schools of Cologne and Westphalia, it is usual to classify the other leading painters of mediæval Germany as belonging either to the School of Swabia or of Franconia. In the former district are included the towns of Colmar, Ulm, and Augsburg, and its art-history culminates in the genius of Hans Holbein the Younger. In Franconia is the magnetic city of Nuremberg—still potent to withdraw us from noisy modernity to the poetic dreamful repose of the past,—and there lived the undaunted dreamer, Albert Dürer.

Of the Swabian School Martin Schongauer (1445-1491) is considered to be the founder. Although born in Colmar, where his father (a goldsmith) had recently settled, he was a member of one of the old patrician families of Augsburg. He was well educated, having studied at the University of Leipzig, and afterwards learned from his father the goldsmith's craft. But his artistic bent was so pronounced that he became also an engraver and a painter.

The art of engraving on wood and copper was one of the discoveries of the wonderful Renaissance movement of the fifteenth century. New inventions in every direction acted and reacted on each other. Not until the fifteenth century did men learn how to make paper from rags. Until then parchment alone was in use, perfectly adapted for the art of the illuminator, but too costly, and in many other ways unsuitable for engraving. Only in the fifteenth century was a good serviceable ink manufactured; and then, with the necessary materials furnished, came the final flash of intuition which transferred the design on the wooden block to the sheet of paper.

The two stimulating gifts to the human race, of printed books and engraved illustrations, came into the world together, indeed the block-pictures preceded in order of time the block-books; and last of all followed the triumphant invention of movable types.

The art of engraving on copper seems to have arisen rather later than that of engraving on wood. Its origin is obscure,

The
Swabian
School

Engraving

Copper-
plate
engraving

but all the earliest specimens of copper-plate engraving were the work probably of men who by profession were goldsmiths. One of the earliest was Martin Schongauer, and his influence was very powerful, not only in Germany, but also in Italy. Michelangelo and Raphael are known to have admired his engravings, and even to have borrowed ideas from them for their own pictures.¹

Schongauer
in Flanders

As a painter Schongauer received his training in Flanders and it is believed that he was a pupil of Roger van der Weyden. *The Madonna in the Rose Bower* at Colmar (Schongauer's masterpiece) shows unmistakably the influence of the Flemish School. It forms a striking contrast to Stephan Lochner's treatment of the same subject at Cologne. Instead of the rounded, placid faces of Mother and Child,—beautiful to the eye and restful to the mind,—we have in Schongauer's picture the angular severity of line, the high foreheads and strained eyebrows of the conventional Flemish type. In brilliancy of colouring he also resembles the Flemings. Yet despite all these mannerisms he retains sufficient individuality to be recognized as a true German, and he is honoured as the founder of a truly national school of painting.

Still confining ourselves to the Swabian School, we pass on next to the famous father and son, Hans Holbein the elder, and Hans Holbein the younger.

Hans
Holbein
the Elder,
1460 or 65-
1524

The elder Holbein was born in Augsburg in the latter half of the fifteenth century, but of his early life we have little exact knowledge. Possibly he may have visited Flanders and received instruction from Roger van der Weyden.

On the death of his father, the name of Hans Holbein as a householder is inscribed on the Augsburg town-register, but it is not known at what date his career as a professional painter began. He never attained to great celebrity, although he was a talented and conscientious artist, and his pictures are now reckoned as very valuable. It is thought that his want of success may have been due to the presence in Augsburg of a rival

Hans Burg-
kmair

¹ There is a good collection of Schongauer's engravings in the British Museum.

artist, Hans Burgkmair (1473-1531). While Holbein steadily adhered to the mediæval traditions derived from Colmar and Flanders, Burgkmair sought inspiration from Italy, and accepted whole-heartedly the new teachings of the Renaissance. He attracted the notice of the Emperor Maximilian, and soon won popularity and fortune. Burgkmair, in his day, was considered the leading artist in Augsburg, and though inferior to the elder Holbein as a painter, his extremely clever engravings were deservedly renowned.

We are not surprised that the quietly laborious Holbein was eclipsed by this dazzling contemporary, and since his death he has suffered from the rivalry of his own more famous son. There has been a too hasty desire to attribute every picture of unquestioned merit to the younger painter; and it is only through the patience and resolute accuracy of modern critics that the disregarded elder Holbein has been vindicated and re-instated in the possession of his own pictures.

Many of these are still in Augsburg, or in the neighbouring towns of Ulm and Basle. One of the most famous is the strikingly beautiful *Martyrdom of S. Sebastian* (now in the Munich gallery) which is shown in our illustration.¹ This is considered to be Holbein's masterpiece, and proves that he did at last yield to the softening influence of the Renaissance love of beauty. A true artist, he loved beauty too when he saw it, and his powerful individuality enabled him to learn a new art-language without sacrificing one jot of his German virility. Those who have seen this picture can only explain it by the supposition that Holbein must have been in Venice. We know nothing from written records of such a visit; but the picture bears authoritative witness to a very remarkable development in the genius of the painter. It was executed in 1515, and seems to have been his last important work. His home in Augsburg was broken up in 1514, presumably on account of money difficulties. The two sons moved in the next year to Basle, and there is no further mention of the father until we hear of his death in 1524 at Isenheim.

¹ See p. 190.

Pictures
by Hans
Holbein
the Elder

His master-
piece

CHAPTER XX

ALBERT DÜRER

THE character and the work of such a man as Albert Dürer would require the study of years to do them justice. He attracts and at the same time baffles those who long to enter into the secrets of his imaginative art. We can but touch the surface of this great subject.

Albert Dürer was born in 1471 at Nuremberg, where his father, by trade a goldsmith, had settled. The elder Dürer was a Hungarian, of peasant stock ; and to this alien extraction may be traced the element of romantic invention which appears in the work of the son. His Keltic strain of melancholy, his intuitions of the supernatural which the Scotch would call "fey," were no doubt a heritage from the silent, hardworking father. "He had no desire for pleasures, was of few words, did not go into society, and was a God-fearing man," is the son's description of him.

The boy Albert must have early shown intellectual promise. He tells us that his father took a special delight in him, and had him taught reading and writing before he began his training as a goldsmith. But Albert's taste for painting was so strong that the father reluctantly consented to a change of work, and in 1486 apprenticed him to Michel Wolgemut, the best painter in the town.

Wolgemut (1434-1519) is considered to be the founder of the Franconian School ; he has left many archaic pictures, which have a quaint charm ; and his name holds an honourable place in the chronicles of art, not only because in his studio the young

Born at
Nurem-
berg, 1471

Appren-
ticed to
Wolgemut,
1486

Dürer was trained, but on account of his own influence throughout Germany. For three years the apprenticeship lasted, and Dürer tells us briefly: "God lent me industry, so that I learnt well".

After this it had been the intention of the elder Dürer to send his son to Colmar to learn engraving under the famous Schongauer. But the death of Schongauer in 1491 prevented a meeting in the flesh between Albert Dürer and the master who seems to have influenced him the most. In 1492, according to the wise custom of those times, he was sent travelling in order to see the work of other schools and to develop his own taste. The Germans give the name "Lehrjahre" to the years of apprenticeship, and "Wanderjahre" to the time of travel. Dürer kept to his original plan, and went direct to Colmar, where he was kindly received by the brothers of Schongauer, and where he carefully studied the master's works, and also the processes of engraving practised in the school which he had founded. Other towns which he visited were Strasburg and Basle, and it is now believed that he also paid a visit to Venice. We may remember that there was a large colony in that town of German merchants—"Tedeschi," on the walls of whose "Exchange" Giorgione and Titian were at a later date to paint frescoes. The young Dürer would therefore find himself among friends. In painting he would see the early works of the brothers Bellini, and it is known that he took back with him to Germany some copies of engravings by Mantegna,—a master greatly revered by Dürer.

On his return to Nuremberg in 1494, he married Agnes Frey, and began at the early age of twenty-three a steady life of work. There are no signs in him of the restlessness and irregularity which so many seem to think inseparable from what is called the artistic temperament. He had learned a trade, he had seen the world, and now gave his whole energies to the prosaic duty of earning a livelihood. He seems to have considered engraving more profitable than painting, and he had no difficulty in procuring work. There were many great printing firms in Nuremberg from which the supply issued of "block pictures"

Wander-
jahre

His
marriage,
1494

(p 173) must have about equalled the supply of books. Dürer was soon engaged on a series of illustrations of the Apocalypse; and it is in these engravings, and in the later series on the lives of Christ and the Virgin that we learn best to understand his genius.

Death of
Dürer's
father, 1502

In 1502 Dürer lost his father, and from that date his mother and youngest brother found their home with him. He had only a few years previously painted a wonderful portrait of the old man (see No. 1938 in the National Gallery) and in a few heart-felt words he describes his death. "It happened by chance that my father fell ill, in such a way that no one could cure him; and when he saw death before his eyes he resigned himself willingly and with great patience, and he recommended my mother to me, and charged us to live a godly life. Therefore I now take her under my care nevermore to forsake her." Dürer faithfully fulfilled this vow. There has been much unprofitable gossip about his marriage being unhappy, but the source of it all is a petulant letter written after Dürer's death by his friend Pirkheimer. Modern research discovers no hidden tragedy in the Nuremberg home, unless it be the absence of children, a real grief to one who loved them, as we know from his drawings of them that Dürer must have done. His deep affection for both father and mother is proved by his own words.

Love of
children

The peculiar tenderness of sentiment and playful humour which show us his heart, are nowhere better illustrated than in the woodcut known as *The Repose* or *The Carpenter's Shop*. It belongs to a very popular series on the Life of the Virgin executed between 1504 and 1506. We know from the legends the various events to be represented, and Dürer has conceived them with homely German literalism; we see the domestic life of his time unrolled before us, and behind nearly every scene there rise—protective and familiar—the quaint buildings of Nuremberg. In the fourteenth cut we have *The Repose in Egypt*, the short interval during the Flight when the Holy Family are at rest. Joseph has at once resumed his carpenter's work (for behind him, as usual, rises a

possible Nuremberg) and he is working at a huge board placed on two trestles. To the right sits a sweet Mother, watching over the typical cradle on rockers, while behind is a group of solemn angels. But quite in front is a group of unmistakable *putti* (p. 128); some are sweeping up the chips made by Joseph's adze, others are stuffing them into a wicker basket, while one, more roguish than the rest, holds a long splinter in his mouth and pretends to be blowing a trumpet. A couple of arch merry-makers are bounding in from the left, and one holds a seductive toy in his hand, no doubt meant as a gift to the sleeping Infant. It is a toy still to be seen in humble back streets, and the children call it a "windmill". Among the valuable collection of engravings in the Taylorian Museum at Oxford, this lively little woodcut is one.

Towards the end of 1505 Dürer went again to Venice, and this second visit at an age when his mental powers had reached their full maturity left a lasting impression on his genius. He too made his mark in Venice, and infused some of his northern strength into the minds of the Venetian colourists. His reputation as an engraver won him respect from the outset. But not until he had executed a picture in oils, *The Feast of the Rose Garlands*, for a chapel connected with the German Exchange did he convince the Venetians that he was also a painter. Titian and Giorgione and the younger men seem to have held aloof from him as a rival; but the old wise Giovanni Bellini was eager always to learn. He begged Dürer to give him as a present one of the brushes with which he produced the fine, parallel lines which gave to hair in his pictures such a look of life. Bellini seems to have suspected the existence of some such implement as the multiplex pen with which ingenious schoolboy-culprits write off several of their "lines" at once. Dürer invited Bellini to see him at work, with a brush such as other painters used, and the old man was amazed at the firm delicate precision of Dürer's skilful fingers. Connected with this stay in Venice we have an interesting series of letters written by Dürer to his friend Willibald Pirckheimer, from which we give a few extracts.

Second
visit to
Venice,
1505-1507

Letters to
Pirckheimer

Feast
of Rose
Garlands

"Item : know that my picture says you would give a ducat to see it. It is very good and beautiful in colour. I have gained great praise for it, but very little profit. . . I have silenced all the painters who said that I was good in engraving but that in painting I did not know how to use my colours. Now everybody says they never saw more beautiful colouring. . . . Know also that my picture is ready as well as *another painting*, the like of which I have never made ; as you don't mind praising yourself, so will I."

All these allusions are to *The Feast of the Rose Garlands* painted for the German chapel. It is now in a convent near Prague. The "other painting" we shall speak of later (p. 184).

In spite of the compliments of the Venetians, Dürer's paintings cannot rank in value with his engravings. The hand which drew those firm delicate parallel lines, so much praised by Bellini, was better fitted to hold the burin than the brush. Dürer never learned to paint with the freedom known to Italian artists, and it is thought that the only sign of Italian influence is to be seen in his *amorini* or *putti*. Yet even these are quite his own ; no Italian ever conceived anything so archly fantastic as the angel with the windmill toy.

In his final letter from Venice he writes : " In ten days I shall have finished here. Oh, how I shall freeze after this sunshine. Here I am a gentleman, at home only a parasite."

Had Dürer wished, he might have remained in the sunshine of Italy ; the Signoria of Venice offered him a sinecure post with a salary, and he could have made a fortune in that art-loving city by the sale of his pictures and engravings. But, unlike Holbein, he rejected the proposal to forsake his country in order to win wealth and fame. He faithfully returned to Nuremberg, to his old tasks and his family responsibilities.

Altered
position in
Nurem-
berg, 1507

Yet after 1507 a new epoch opens in his life. He had gained recognition as a painter, and many commissions came in for pictures. His fellow-townsmen no longer treated him as a "parasite," and young artists were eager to become his pupils both in painting and engraving. He removed in 1509 to a large house in the Zistelgasse, where he set up a printing press

of his own, and superintended the training of apprentices. This house is still carefully preserved in memory of Nuremberg's greatest son, and draws many pilgrim feet to the picturesque old town on the Pegnitz. It is known as the "Dürerhaus". Here Dürer spent thirteen years of honourable and almost incessant toil. The minute care which he bestowed on his paintings, his drawings, and even the cutting of many of his own blocks, was a hindrance to money-making. He was a man who, in Oliver Cromwell's phrase, "had some conscience in what he did," and he preferred poverty to bad work. He had his times too of dreaming, when, sunk in a kind of trance, the visions came to him which he strove so pathetically to embody in visible form. Like every true artist he suffered from disappointment in his own achievements.

"The art" (he writes) "of true, artistic, and lovely execution in painting is hard to come unto; it needeth long time and a hand practised to perfect freedom." And again, "Ah! how often in my sleep do I behold great works of art and beautiful things, the like whereof never appear to me awake, but so soon as I awake the remembrance of them leaveth me".

This desire for beauty may raise a smile when we remember the uncompromising ugliness of some of his pictured faces. Yet we may call it a "fine ugliness," which expresses a noble side of character. Toil, fatigue, disappointment—these were among the elements of life which Dürer accepted as essentially human; he understood them, and did not shrink from depicting them.

In 1514 a great sorrow fell upon him, and drew from him, as only sorrow can, the deepest thoughts of his nature. In that year, on May 17, his mother died after an illness lasting twelve months. He tells of her death in his own direct way. "She died hard . . . I saw also how death came and gave her two great blows on the heart, and how she shut her eyes and mouth and departed in great sorrow. I prayed for her, and had such great grief for her that I can never express. . . . And in her death she looked still more lovely than she was in her life."

It was after this blow which death had struck on his own heart that his two strongest and most imaginative engravings were conceived: *The Knight, Death, and the Devil* in 1513, during her illness; and *Melancholia* in 1514. If the reader does not know these he should get to know them.

The
Triumphal
Arch

Already in 1512 Dürer had attracted the notice of the Emperor Maximilian, and had been engaged to execute a series of designs for an immense woodcut called *The Triumphal Arch*, intended to immortalize the deeds of Maximilian himself. Dürer executed it, and it is one of his finest pieces of work. But his connection with this unstable and impecunious Emperor was most unfortunate. The spontaneous work to which his genius impelled him was abandoned in order to gratify the whims of the Emperor, and the rich rewards which were promised him were never received. It pains us to think of Dürer in the attitude of a suppliant to such a man as Maximilian.

Charles V.
becomes
Emperor,
1519

In 1519 Maximilian died, and in order to procure the ratification of the yearly grant of one hundred florins (still unpaid) Dürer determined to bring the matter to the notice of the new Emperor, Charles V. We have already learned to know him as the friend and patron of Titian (p. 113). Hearing that Charles was going first to the Netherlands, Dürer prepared to go there in person to proffer his request.

Journey to
the Nether-
lands,
1520-1521

Accompanied by his wife, he left Nuremberg in 1520, and did not return till the following year. During this journey Dürer kept a diary, and we can trace the whole route, so well known now to the modern tourist, as he moved slowly down the Rhine from Mainz, stopping a few days with cousins at Cologne, and finally reaching Antwerp. There he was welcomed as an honoured guest by the burgomaster and the guild of painters, and he was greatly impressed by the wealth and magnificence of that prosperous city. We would fain quote from his quaintly fascinating pages, but lack of space forbids. We remember that when in Cologne he paid "two white pfennigs to see Meister Steffan's picture" (p. 171). At last comes the notice: "I obtained my 'Confirmatio' from the Emperor,

through my lords of Nuremberg, *with great trouble and labour*".

Dürer spent the winter in Antwerp, and might have remained there if he wished. The Town Council of Antwerp invited him, as the Venetians had done, to accept a salaried post, and to honour their city by making it his home; but affection for Nuremberg drew him back to the old house in the Zistelgasse. His working days were nearly over and he returned home seriously out of health and depressed.

During the later years of his life, the great religious problems of his day gained increasing hold of him. His friend Melan-^{Last years 1521-1528}thon says that "in him the artistic element was by no means the most important". It was impossible that the deep-thinking, passionate-hearted Dürer should stand aloof—rapt in a dream-world of art—when his country was travailing in the throes of a new birth. But there was a division within himself which made his position tragic. His religious life, the mainspring of all his activities, had its root in the old faith taught him by his mother. He revered the Sacraments of the Church, he wished for no violent changes in doctrine; but his patriotism set him in antagonism to the authority of the Pope, and his high moral earnestness had long shown him the need for purer standards of conduct. We are justified in believing that had he lived longer his sympathies would have been given whole-heartedly to the reformers. He greatly revered Dr. Martin Luther, and speaks of him as an "inspired being". He loved Melanthon; and his old friend Pirkheimer was an open supporter of reformed doctrines. During his last years Dürer worked mainly at portraits, and these were nearly all of prominent men of the reform party; his sacred subjects were taken chiefly from the gospels; and his last great work was a strong, impressive oil picture of *The Four Apostles*.

They stand in two groups, S. John and S. Peter, and S. Paul ^{The Four Apostles} with S. Mark. Sometimes it is thought that Dürer meant to depict in these the four temperaments about which mediæval writers had so much to say: the melancholic, the phlegmatic, the sanguine, and the choleric. His S. John is thought to

represent melancholy; a beautiful, graceful figure, with a finely cut face said to be a likeness of Melancthon. Dürer must have known from his own life that the giving out of much love exposes the heart to pain, and to episodes of melancholy. His S. Peter is bending intent over a book; the phlegmatic temperament suggesting sedentary studies. S. Mark's is the only head which is raised, and he looks out full at the spectator. S. Paul is regarded as the strongest figure of all; choleric, in the sense of having the indefatigable energy which will contend for the right even to the death. This picture Dürer presented to his native town, begging that it should always remain in the Rathaus (town-hall). For a long time his wish was respected, but at last one of the Electors of Bavaria, a powerful neighbour—one whom it would be impolitic to offend—induced the Nurembergers to let him buy it for his own collection. A copy now hangs in the Nuremberg Rathhaus, and the original is in the Munich gallery.

Dürer's
death, 1528

In 1528 quietly and suddenly Albert Dürer passed away. On his grave is the expressive word "Emigravit"; only to be translated into our feeble English by a whole sentence: "He hath departed into another country".

Dürer's
paintings

Although Dürer is unquestionably greater as an engraver than as a painter, he has created many beautiful works in oils. We have spoken of *The Feast of the Rose Garlands* and *The Four Apostles*. There is also at Florence *The Adoration of the Kings*, already described (p. 27).

The
Crucifixion

But perhaps the most perfectly beautiful of all his pictures is the *Crucifixion* of our illustration. This is probably the "other painting" (p. 180) about which he wrote to Pirkheimer "the like of which he had never painted before". Mr. Lionel Cust thus describes it: "In this marvellous little picture the blending of German and Italian feeling is carried out with the greatest success. It may be doubted whether any painting of the Italian or any other School can rival this little panel painting, only $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches high by 6 inches broad, in intensity and nobility of expression, in truth and precision of drawing, and in charm and richness of colour. Executed like a miniature



CRUCIFIXION

ALBERT DURER

Royal Gallery, Dresden

painting, it is as large in conception and rendering as an altar-piece of Bellini or Raphael. The body of the crucified Saviour is German, but without the hard bony conventions of Northern art. It hangs relieved against a dark and sullen sky, which breaks behind the foot of the cross into a low sunset horizon reflected in a deep blue lake bounded by the purple hills in the shadows of evening. A few thin trees help to accentuate the solitude and pathos of the situation. Small as the painting is, it can never fail to impress, and it may be regarded as the high-water mark of Dürer's painting."¹ This treasure is at Dresden. We should notice further that Dürer departs from custom in his treatment of the head, which is usually represented in a drooping attitude. But in this picture there is no hint of weakness or defeat. The long agony visibly accomplished between earth and heaven, is no unavailing display. The words "It is finished" are words of victory; and the tranquil beauty of the undefeated form bespeaks the conqueror.

It is interesting to remember that Dürer was the first to employ water-colours, and many sketches from nature in this medium were made on his various journeys. Nothing seems to have escaped his observing eye, and, in their close truth to nature, his studies are as valuable as those of Leonardo. He never, it is true, attained a full knowledge of the human form, but he observed in other directions: a butterfly, a beetle, a rare flower, the pricked ears of a hare, a startled partridge; of such objects as these he has left exquisitely careful drawings and studies. Many of them may be seen in the Print Room of the British Museum, and among them is a charming little complete picture in water-colour called the *Weierhaus* (or fish-pond house). It is a frail timber structure, tall and narrow, on a small island. All round stretches the reed-bordered pool, with a queer old boat moored to the bank. The reflections of the trees on the island, and the turreted house, are softly shown on the still surface of the water. The

Water-
colour
drawings

¹ *Portfolio Monograph on Dürer* (No. 31, p. 58).

word "Weierhaus" is written very small below, followed by the famous monogram with which he signed his work, . In his drawings and sketches we read his love for nature, and recognize that he loved and painted landscape for its own sake, having felt the poetry of the visible world about him.

Dürer's
portraits

In portrait painting Dürer shows masterly power. His style is laboriously realistic, every line on the face, every single hair on the head is faithfully reproduced. At least so it seems as we pore and pore over the exquisitely careful workmanship. Yet the final effect is bold, and some of his portraits are said to be quite equal to Holbein's in technical excellence. There is a reflection in them however of Dürer's own mind and attitude towards life that gives them a more personal interest. His portraits of himself are naturally self-revealing, but in his other portraits we feel that we are shown the man as he looked to Dürer, not necessarily as he appeared to the ordinary spectator.

Portraits of
himself

The best-known portraits of himself are the handsome, brightly-dressed, Venetian-looking "gentleman" so well known to visitors to the Uffizi Gallery at Florence; and the wonderful Christ-like head given in our illustration,¹ which is one of the glories of the Pinakothek at Munich. The former was painted in 1498, the latter in 1508. The portrait at Florence is said by the critics to be a copy, the original of which is at Madrid.

Portrait of
his father

The only sample of Dürer's work in our National Gallery is a portrait of his father (No. 1938). It was formerly in the collection of Louisa, Lady Ashburton, and became the property of the nation in 1904. Of this fine pathetic head four examples were already known. Three of these (in Munich, Frankfort, and at Syon House) had been proved to be copies; but the beautiful picture in the Prado—fully signed, and dated 1498—is universally recognized as authentic. Its history can be traced, and it is known to be one of two original portraits of the elder Dürer presented by the city of Nuremberg to Charles I. In spite of the fact that our National Gallery example is unsigned,

¹ See p. 192.

many critics accept it as the second of those two original portraits. It is a splendid piece of faithful, realistic work; but beneath the realism there is a profoundly moving strain of pathos. The peculiar soft brown tone and red background give a rich harmonious sense of autumnal calm. In the firm set mouth and grave, musing eyes, we can read all that Dürer tells us of the man of few pleasures and few words, who did his daily work in the fear of God. There are no signs of disillusion or fretfulness in that wrinkled face, only the natural physical weariness which, after seventy-two years of toil, makes a man at last desirous of rest. Dürer shows us the simple unquestioning fortitude which his own heart recognized in the father whom he honoured.

CHAPTER XXI

HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER

Hans Hol-
bein the
Younger,
1497-1543

At Basle,
1515-1526

The
Praise of
Folly

WHILE Dürer, the last of the mediæval painters of Germany, was working at Nuremberg, Hans Holbein the Younger was rapidly progressing towards that mastery over the secrets of technique which places him among the moderns. He was born in Augsburg in 1497, and it is probable that he and his brother were trained in the arts of painting and engraving by their father. After the break up in 1515 of the home at Augsburg, the two brothers, aged twenty and eighteen, migrated to Basle, an important town at that time, and a centre of intellectual life. Erasmus, the well-known scholar and humanist, used to call it "the peaceful abode of the Muses," and he was living there when the young Holbeins arrived. They were fortunate enough to find employment as illustrators with one of the great printing firms which were supplying Europe with books. Something like two hundred designs for wood-cuts are attributed to Hans during this first stay in Basle which lasted until 1526. For a short time Hans was in Switzerland and on returning to Basle he executed many mural paintings there, which have unfortunately perished. At last he made acquaintance with Erasmus, who, besides cultivating the Muses, took an intellectual interest in the cause of religious reform. It was said of him that he "laid the egg" which was afterwards "hatched" by Luther. He certainly wrote what we should now call a very advanced book, *The Praise of Folly*; in which delightful and penetrating satire he holds up the more reprehensible practices of the Roman Church to the ridicule they deserved. The younger Holbein seems to have appreci-

ated it; and in one copy—carefully guarded in the museum at Basle—the margin has been filled in with pen and ink sketches by his hand to illustrate the text.

It was at Basle that Holbein designed the series of wood-cuts known as *The Dance of Death* which many years later were published. This subject was no invention of his; it had already been roughly painted by many a nameless artist of the Middle Ages. It is not likely that it emanated from one mind, but rather it seems to have grown, as the old ballads grew, by frequent touchings and re-touchings. The learned trace its origin to the monks, who would represent a living man side by side with a corpse to suggest the nearness of death, and the need of preparation. But the irreverent populace chose to regard this weird couple of dead and living as partners in a dance, and soon introduced the figure of Death himself with a fiddle to supply the music. When Holbein caught up the popular fancy and made his own version of the Dance of Death he exchanged the idea of a corpse for Death himself, represented as a skeleton, and in each picture he appears to summon his partners to the world of shadows. He lays his hand on nobleman and peasant, on priest and king and Pope with equal authority. Sometimes he mimics jocosely the habits of those whom he comes to fetch; wearing a mitre when he accosts the Pope, and marching solemnly “with candle, with book and with bell” when he summons the priest. He plays on guitar or lute when his call is addressed to the worldling. There is no hint of “the pity of it,” there is no trace of the moral earnestness which might have conceived the scene as a warning to fellow-mortals of the insecurity of life. Yet in some of the cuts, it is true, a vein of satire may be detected. In one, where a haughty nobleman is represented, we see Death creeping up behind and striking him with a shield on which is emblazoned a coat of arms. There is a hint here of the feudal tyranny of the nobles so soon to meet with its deserts in the Peasants’ War. The whole series is full of a curious bitter humour which seems to rejoice in the knowledge that one tyrant walked the earth who overtopped the other tyrants in power. Holbein’s

genius gives artistic utterance to the misery of an oppressed nation ; a misery which finds vent in a scornful laugh. This laugh is immortalized in *The Dance of Death*.

Religious
pictures

The Meyer
Madonna

It was also during this first stay in Basle that Holbein began to show his power as a portrait painter, and that he executed his two finest religious pictures, *The Madonna of Solothurn* and *The Meyer Madonna*. This latter picture has been chosen as our illustration. In the foreground kneels Burgomaster Meyer of Basle, the donor of the picture, with his family. In front of him is a gaily dressed youth (his son) holding a lovely little naked curly-haired boy. The young girl to the right, who is gaily dressed and wears a jewelled head-dress, is Meyer's daughter. Behind her is Meyer's second wife ; and the nun beyond is thought by some to be Meyer's eldest daughter by his first wife. The picture now belongs to the Grand Duke of Hesse, and hangs in a private room in his castle at Darmstadt. But there is a copy in the Dresden gallery with which most travellers in Germany are familiar, and from this our illustration is taken.

All are agreed that this *Meyer Madonna* is one of the great sacred pictures of the world. But so many and such conflicting interpretations have been given of its "inner meaning" that we approach the subject with great diffidence. This at least must be granted that it has every appearance of being a *Votive Madonna* ; if so, we are justified in believing that some great blessing received from the Virgin must have prompted the good burgomaster to order this picture in her honour. The generally accepted story is, that, in answer to prayer, his little boy had recovered from a dangerous illness. It is thought that the merry little fellow in the foreground is that restored child. But the Christ-child (certainly in the Dresden copy) looks in contrast to be ailing. None can deny that in his attitude there is an unusual languor. It is this supposed sickness of the Christ-child which has led to many strange fancies, Mr. Ruskin going so far as to suggest that it is the boy in the foreground who is really the Christ. Few, however, can accept so entire a reversal of accepted traditions. But remembering that Hol-



MARTYRDOM OF S. SEBASTIAN
HANS HOLBEIN THE ELDER
*Reproduction of the original in the
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*



THE MEYER MADONNA
HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER
*Reproduction of the original in the
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*

bein had been brought up as a Catholic, and was also a man of very original imagination, we are justified in believing that some specific and spiritual thought is intended to be conveyed by this novel representation of the sacred group. The extremely simple thought, that in order to restore the little earthly child—towards whom he stretches out a hand in blessing—some of his own life has been expended, is one which in no way conflicts with the plainly visible features of the subject as represented to the eye. "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses," is S. Matthew's short summary of Isaiah's prophecy of a suffering Messiah. Holbein, who knew Erasmus, may well have read some chapters out of S. Matthew's gospel; and the most literal of the critics can hardly resent the suggestion that a picture which has so deeply impressed the imagination of thousands of men and women may have in it a deeper significance than can at once be apprehended by the eye. The extreme beauty of the colouring gives to the picture an effect of mingled solemnity and joy.

The year 1526 closes the first period of the life of Holbein. He had reached the age of twenty-nine, and as an artist his powers were mature.

Owing to the spread of the Reformation, and the violently destructive measures which in some places accompanied its progress, the "peaceful abode of the Muses" was no longer a fitting name for the town of Basle. The images of the Virgin and Saints were destroyed by the Protestant party, and some extremists even condemned the presence of pictures in a church. The artist's occupation for the time being was gone. Even Erasmus was obliged to quit Basle and return to his native Holland, and he seems to have suggested to Holbein the possibility of finding work in England. A letter of recommendation from Erasmus secured the patronage of Sir Thomas More; and Holbein was a guest, probably during the whole of his first stay in England, in that bright, cultivated home at Chelsea of which we have such full records. He painted several portraits of the More family, and of the various distinguished men whom Sir Thomas More numbered among his friends.

Holbein in
England,
1526-1528

Return to
Basle, 1528

In 1528 (the year of Dürer's death) Holbein returned to Basle, but the town was still in a disturbed state, so that it was hard to obtain profitable employment. In 1532 we find him again in England, and in this country he resided until his death.

Second
visit to
England,
1532-1543

The position of Sir Thomas More had changed during Holbein's absence in Basle. He was now Lord Chancellor and a special favourite of Henry VIII. He was able to introduce the German painter to the king, and after this there was no difficulty in procuring commissions. Holbein lived among the colony of German merchants who had fixed quarters in London, as in Venice. We remember the Tedeschi of that town. Their common gathering place, the hall of their guild, was known as the "Steelyard," and many of Holbein's most successful portraits are of members of this "Corporation".

Portrait of
George
Gisze

One of the finest is the *Portrait of George Gisze*, our second illustration. The picture itself is full of colour; the young man's hair is light brown, his doublet of cool red, the overcoat and cap are black. The wall behind is of painted green wood, the rich, many-coloured table-cloth is strewn with shining articles required in his work. The Venetian glass vase holds a bunch of carnations, symbolic, as the Germans tell us, of the season of happy love. Every detail is painted with the finest delicacy, such as we find in Flemish and Dutch pictures. The words can be read on the letter, and on the bit of paper on the wall. "For the hands of my brother, George Gizse, at London in England," is on the letter. The motto on the wall is "Nulla sine merore voluptas" (No pleasure without pain). We may connect it if we will with the carnations, and believe that another friend besides his brother was separated from Gisze by distance. The skill of Holbein as an artist appears in the marvellous way in which this strong quiet face rivets our attention. We are not distracted by the multiplicity of details, they almost become a part of the man, and heighten the impression that we have been admitted to the privacy of a real sixteenth century business sanctum.

During his ten years in England Holbein painted the portrait of King Henry, probably more than once. But of the



PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF

ALBERT DÜRER
Pinakothek, Munich
(See p. 186)



GEORGE GISZE

HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER
Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin

many copies existing on the Continent it is thought that only a few are actually by the hand of Holbein. His most famous group represented Henry VII. and his wife, and Henry VIII. with Jane Seymour; this was painted for Whitehall Palace, but was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1693. A large portrait group of the More family has also been destroyed, but a pencil sketch of it was given by Holbein to Erasmus, and is now safely preserved at Basle. No painter has received unkindlier usage at the hand of Fate than Holbein, as so many of his works seem to have disappeared. But those portraits he has left are of peculiar interest to the student of history, besides being of the highest value as works of art. Holbein had the gift of seizing the essentials in a face, and with a few lines showing the character of the man represented. This power is specially seen in his drawings.

For all his portraits Holbein made careful studies before-hand, sometimes of the accessories, but always of the face itself. His first aim was to catch a likeness, and with a free and rapid hand he would throw it lightly on the paper. These preliminary sketches were generally made in charcoal, or with red chalk; they are marvellously clever, and a large number of them, fortunately, have been preserved. The King's collection at Windsor is the finest in the world; and from these sketches as much as from the completed paintings we are able to make acquaintance with the leading characters of a most interesting period in history. Although the famous portrait group of the More family is lost to us, we may still look at the calm, strong, and tenderly humorous face of Sir Thomas More, as Holbein saw it in life. And when looking at so many others—at Archbishop Warham, Jane Seymour and Henry VIII. as Holbein shows them, history takes on a new aspect of reality; we know these people and understand them as never before. Erasmus in particular, who puzzles the mere historian, is revealed to us with marvellous insight. We see the refined and complacent scholar, who can tolerate with a smile the excesses of both religious camps, provided no claims are made on him to run any risks in defence of either. One of Holbein's most successful

Holbein's
drawings

portraits of Erasmus (an oil painting) is in the Louvre. But the two most valuable of all Holbein's portraits are considered to be that of a courtly-looking elderly Frenchman named Morette, now in the Dresden gallery; and the cartoon of Henry VIII. at Hardwick.

Dance of
Death
published,
1538

Portrait of
Anne of
Cleves

Holbein's position during the last years of his life seems to have been that of a court-painter, as he received from the king a fixed yearly salary. In 1538 he was at the summit of success and in that year he at last published his forty woodcuts of *The Dance of Death*, which became at once popular throughout Europe. In that same year he was sent to Brussels to paint the portrait of the Duchess of Milan, a young widow whom King Henry thought desirable as a fourth wife. In the next year he went abroad again to paint Anne of Cleves, and this time his portrait erred on the side of flattery. Henry, we remember, scornfully described her as "a Flemish mare" and soon divorced her. The portrait of Anne of Cleves now in the Louvre is believed to be the identical picture which Holbein painted in 1539. Four years later he was commissioned to paint a large picture containing many portraits for the Hall of the Barber Surgeons' Company in London. But he did not live to finish it, and in 1543 he died; probably of the plague, then raging in London.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

The picture called *The Ambassadors* (No. 1314) is considered to be a very fine example of Holbein's work and was painted in 1533 during his first visit to England. There is in the official catalogue such a full description of the picture itself and the two men represented in it that the reader is advised to consult that notice.

Portrait
of the
Duchess
of Milan

At the present time (1912) there hangs near to *The Ambassadors* the portrait of the Duchess of Milan which Holbein painted in 1538. She stands at full length facing us, and is robed entirely in black. The charm of her sensitive hands and her young girlish face is accentuated by this dark background. The simplicity of the attitude, and the open, fearless glance of the eyes suggest a very attractive personality. She is described as having "a singular good countenance, and

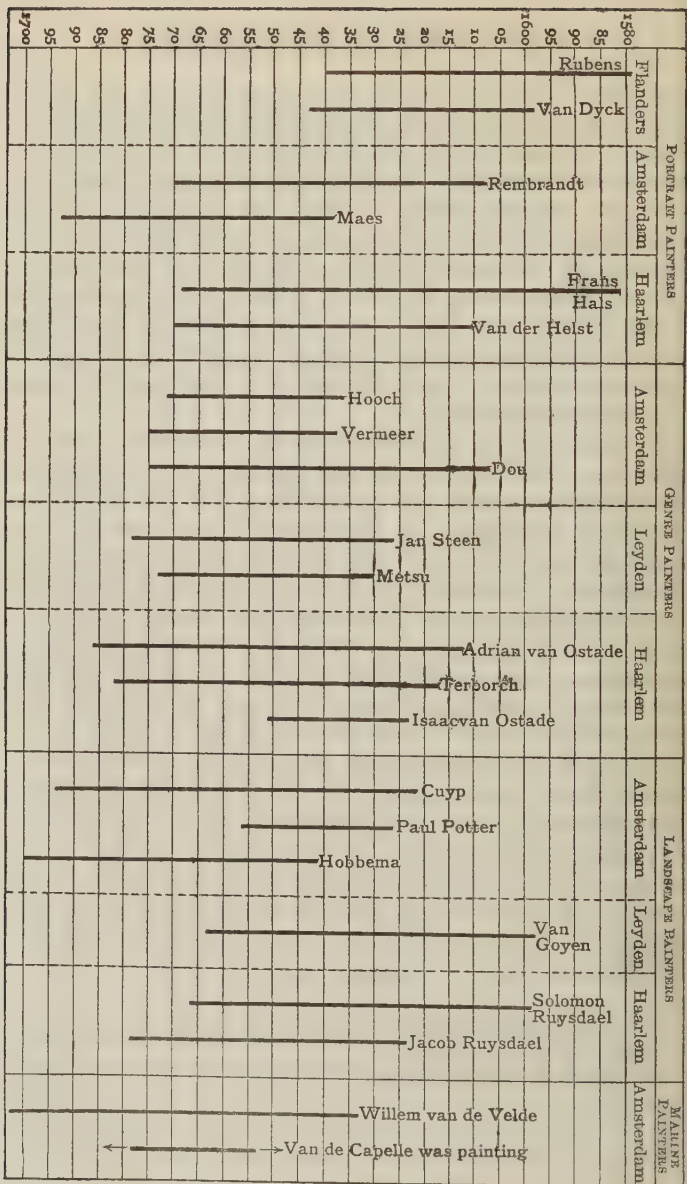
when she chanceth to smile, there appeareth two pits in her cheeks and one in her chin, the which becometh her excellently well". This is the lady who rejected Henry VIII.'s offer of marriage with the witty retort, that, being provided with only one head, she was unable to oblige his majesty. This very interesting and beautiful portrait is now fortunately the property of the nation.¹ We can hardly turn aside from it without being arrested by Dürer's portrait of his father which hangs on the same wall. The contrast between these two greatest of German painters is almost forced upon us, and the following quotation from a German critic may therefore prove of interest to the reader.

"The greatness of the two masters lies in essentially different spheres. Dürer's imagination had a creative force to which no other German painter has ever attained. In the gift of invention, in intelligence, in feeling, and also in culture Dürer stands far above Holbein. But the latter, unlike Dürer, was a true painter. Colour, to him, is not a mere cloak to the shapes which he calls into being; it is something essential, of the inmost being of his art; it is a means of expressing his artistic perception. Dürer issued from a school which was still half under the sway of the Gothic style and it was by his genius that he discovered the paths which the new art was to follow.

"Holbein, on the other hand, was in no way connected with the art of the Middle Ages. He was trained by his father, who had kept pace with the Renaissance, and this had reached its maturity by the time that the boy, born in the year 1497, was capable of receiving instruction in art and turning it to account. So we have no need to school ourselves in the language of form which Holbein uses; it is immediately intelligible to us."²

¹ The recent agitation about the threatened loss of this picture must be fresh in the mind of the reader.

² *Holbein*, by H. Knackfuss, translated by Campbell Dodgson (pp. 1, 2).



CHAPTER XXII

DUTCH PICTURES

IT has been said by M. Havard, author of one of the standard books on Dutch painters, that we cannot apply to their works the generic term of the "Dutch School". There seem to be no common ideals, certainly no art traditions, to give a sense of unity to the immense number of pictures produced in this little country of Holland. Even Rembrandt imposed his methods on only a few halting followers. Not that there are no distinguishing features by which to recognize Dutch pictures and put them into a class apart. These abound with some monotony.

The difference between the art of Italy and the art of Holland is fundamental, it results from the pursuit of diametrically opposed aims. In Italy certain laws of choice and treatment were universally recognized, so that the foundation of art was firm, while over this played the "infinite variety" of personal genius or talent. Its aim was to eliminate the trivial, and to direct all the powers of conception towards the representation of the best of which the human mind has vision. It achieved this aristocratic aim; and has left us works which ennoble and refine the feelings by lifting us out of the commonplace into the contemplation of ideal beauty.

In Holland, on the other hand, there was universal licence, each man was a law to himself; he looked at the confined area within which his own mind happened to move, and he painted the everyday objects nearest to hand. The result was a democratic art, homely and at times very pleasing, but often sinking

Contrast
with Italian
pictures

into the commonplace. Among these pedestrian Dutchmen we gain but few glimpses of "the best of which the human mind has vision". But if we are to appreciate them—and the catholic-minded person will draw pleasure from the trivial as well as the exalted experiences of life—we must fix our attention on what is excellent in their work.

Imitative
skill of the
Dutch

Theirs is essentially an imitative art. They wished to reproduce objects visible to the eye with such extreme exactness that we might believe them to be reflected in a mirror. They discovered most cleverly how to render the exact texture of the objects under observation: silk, satin, velvet, lawn, brocade will be exhibited almost with the connoisseur knowledge of a salesman. Cheese, carrots, onions, fish, raw meat will be displayed in such a way as to instruct the conscientious cook about to disburse her mistress's money. It is very clever of the Dutch painters to be able to do these things. But they can rise higher; they can see a landscape with all its obvious features and its various tones of colour; and they can see the men and women of their day. The majority of the former seem to have spent much time in taverns, where glass in hand and a grin upon their faces, we are permitted to see them (in backstreet phraseology) "enjoying themselves". Through the dextrous employment of the brushes of many independent Dutchmen this particular form of enjoyment remains permanently visible to the eye of succeeding generations. The subject becomes, after much repetition—dull. Our search must be directed towards those painters whose work is not dull, and fortunately Holland has given birth to many of these.

Rise of
Dutch
painting

Some trace back the origin of Dutch painting as far as to Dierick Bouts and Lucas van Leyden. Bouts (1400-1475) was a native of Haarlem, but as all his active life was spent in Flanders, and his work shows affinity to that of the van Eycks and van der Weyden, he is usually more correctly classified as belonging to the Flemish School. Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533) has been called the patriarch of the Dutch School. He was an artist of merit in many departments, painting in distemper, oils, and on glass; and he was really great as an engraver

Lucas van
Leyden

Albert Dürer speaks of a visit to "Maister Lucas who engraves in copper," and there seems to have existed a strong feeling of respect between the two artists.

But before any movement in art could develop from the central germ of this one painter the Reformation had caught away men's minds into a new direction. The teachings of Luther soon gained a footing in the Netherlands where the love of political liberty had prepared the national mind for liberty of thought.

In 1556 Charles V. abdicated, the man of tact, who main- Philip II.
tained his authority by partially overlooking the spread of heresy of Spain,
in the Netherlands. Then Philip II. came into power, a man 1556
of implacable bigotry. He introduced the Inquisition and sent his terrible agent, the Duke of Alva, to crush out the double resistance made by the unfortunate country against his political and religious tyranny. Alva's Blood-Council condemned and executed nearly every patriot of commanding position. But William, Prince of Orange, known as the Silent, had slipped through the meshes of Alva's net. He headed that rising of the Netherlands against the power of Spain which rivals in splendour the Greek wars of patriotism against Persia. We know the story; and how at last the Netherlands split in two, and only the seven northern provinces continued the fight.

It was by the Union of Utrecht in 1579 that Holland as a Union of
nation was born. Almost at once the art of Holland broke Utrecht,
into full blossom, and in a century perished. It seems as 1579
though that long strain of endurance on the heights of human effort had produced a violent reaction. After war, and the solemnities of a daily comradeship with death, but one joy seems to have been desired, to escape from thought either by the fireside or in the tavern. All the old subjects must have seemed tainted with the spirit of Rome from whose cruel grasp the people of Holland had just torn themselves free. Their drinking-scenes suggest the delirious laugh which follows an unexpected release from danger; their kitchen trivialities the determined direction of the mind towards mechanical operations after a too severe strain on the emotions. These Dutch-

men who chose the near things of life for their study were keen observers, and they acquired a skill in technique which makes a just claim to our admiration.

Classifica-
tion of
Dutch
painters

To classify and remember the many hundreds of names connected with Dutch art is however a troublesome task. To aid the memory it is usual to arrange them according to the subjects treated: (1) portraits, (2) landscapes and sea pictures, (3) still life, (4) genre painters. This term, *genre* (kind, or sort), is used for a particular sort of pictures, those dealing with everyday life. Confining ourselves to very few, we give as a further aid to classification a table in which the artists are grouped again under the towns with which they were connected. At Amsterdam Rembrandt lived and worked, and there several lesser artists were trained. A large group of well-known names is connected with Leyden. To show the parallelism of dates with Flemish art, the "lines of life" of Rubens and Van Dyck are added.

Portrait-
painters :
Frans Hals,
1581 (?) -
1666

The first great Dutch portrait-painter was Frans Hals, born probably in Antwerp about 1581. It is thought that Frans Hals had his training under Adam van Noort, the master of Rubens (p. 150). But very little is actually known; and an extremely puzzling fact is that no work of striking merit can be attributed to him earlier than 1616, when he was over thirty years of age. Haarlem was then his home, but his habits were so irregular that he was rarely free from debt, and in his old age was saved from destitution by a small allowance from the town-funds. His power of rendering a life-like portrait has hardly ever been excelled: if by any one, by Velazquez alone. He likes to catch a momentary expression, so that one is almost startled by the first sight of one of his merry faces. He was a rapid worker, and in his later portraits uses little colour beyond the natural flesh tints thrown into relief by black and white drapery. At Haarlem are many of the finest pictures ever painted by Hals. Many of them depict groups of officers belonging to various shooting-guilds of the town; a special favourite is that which we have chosen for our illustration. Its full name is *The Assembly of the Officers of the Arquebusiers of*



ASSEMBLY OF THE OFFICERS OF THE ARQUEBUSIERS OF ST. ADRIAEN

FRANS HALS
Museum, Haarlem

St. Adriaen, and it is considered the most artistically successful of all his vivacious groups. It is dated 1633, when the artist was in his prime.

In the National Gallery we have two fine examples of the art of Frans Hals, Nos. 1021 and 1051. On the latter picture is the date 1633, the same as the *S. Adrian* group; and a new "*Family Group*" has recently been added. The so-called *Laughing Cavalier* in the Wallace Collection is an extremely attractive example of his earlier manner; full of vital interest, and a feast of colour.

Van der Helst, a native of Haarlem, is thought to have been much influenced by Hals, even if not strictly speaking his pupil. He worked chiefly in Amsterdam, and many of his best portrait-groups are in the Ryks Museum there. Sir Joshua Reynolds says of him that he was the first to make "a picture of portraits". Yet some of his best work is in single heads, such as the *Portrait of a Lady* (No. 1937) in the National Gallery—a most interesting example.

To Rembrandt van Rhyn we devote a separate chapter. The one name selected from among his immediate followers is that of Nicholas Maes.

He was born at Dordrecht and trained in Rembrandt's studio at Amsterdam. Later in life he spent about ten years in Antwerp, and returned in 1678 to Amsterdam. But little more than this is known about him, and even this is doubtful. For so great a difference is seen between the work of the early Maes (before he visited Antwerp) and the work of the late Maes, that some critics are of opinion that there were two distinct painters of that name. The pictures of the "early Maes" are very rare and valuable; of the four in the National Gallery, two are considered especially fine. His portraits are much in the style of Rembrandt's, and his figure painting is so good that he imparts a high degree of interest to the most ordinary of his genre subjects.

The Idle Servant in our Gallery (No. 207) is one of the best pieces of work ever executed by Maes. The door opening into the inner room gives, not only an artistic loop-hole for the admission of light into the picture, but by its

Portraits in
London

Van der
Helst, 1611
or 1612-
1670

Nicholas
Maes,
1632-1693

Pictures in
National
Gallery

suggestion of family life, arouses a feeling of inward well-being in the spectator. *The Dutch Housewife* (No. 159) is almost equally clever and characteristic.

Classed among the painters of genre we have first, as connected with Amsterdam, the names of de Hooch and Vermeer; each of these is supreme in his own province, and the works of both are rare.

De Hooch,
1629- after:
1677

We fortunately possess in the National Gallery three pictures by de Hooch¹ which cannot be surpassed by any example from his brush. They are flooded with light; they make all the other pictures in the room look faded and dull. It is this power of bringing light into his pictures which gives to the work of de Hooch its extraordinary charm. He understands too so to use every detail introduced as to make them serve direct pictorial ends. Our illustration is chosen again from the Ryks Museum;² a charming little scene from the drama of every-day conjured for us into permanent life by the skill of a true artist. He was born in Rotterdam, and christened there in 1629. But he seems to have been working for some years at Delft, and there it is thought that he met Fabritius (a pupil of Rembrandt's) from whom he may have learned something of Rembrandt's methods of painting light. But de Hooch has his own method, quite different from that of Rembrandt; and instead of creating centres of brilliant light by contrast with darkness, he seems able permanently to capture the pure light of day so that it fills every corner of his canvas. Late in life de Hooch settled in Amsterdam, and there died.

John
Vermeer,
1632-1675

John Vermeer of Delft is of the artistic kindred of de Hooch, and indeed may have been his pupil. He too excels in evoking the magical spirit of light. His technique is different from that of de Hooch, being more exquisitely delicate, and to the trained eye of the connoisseur the light in his pictures appears actually to vibrate. He too diffuses the light throughout the whole picture. Some of his finest works are in Holland. His *Milk-woman* in the Six Collection at Amsterdam is particu-

¹ These are now separated and, in consequence, less effectively brilliant.

² See p. 204.

larly famous; and his *View of Delft* at the Hague shows us his native town, quietly beautiful, with houses and wharfs reflected in the still canal waters, as only a true artist could have seen and depicted it. Recently (in 1903) another very precious Vermeer was added to the Hague collection; just a *Girl's Head*, full of the simple yet inscrutable witchery of youth.

There is a valuable example of this master at Windsor, *The Music Lesson*; and *The Lady at the Spinet* in the National Gallery (No. 1383) is, in spite of injurious restoration, a very characteristic piece of work.¹ Supreme in his own province, remarkable for his loving finish and purity of colour, Vermeer has been compared as an artist with Jane Austen. The simplest every-day themes acquire a grace that is almost ethereal when touched by those sensitive hands.

Gerard Dou belongs to a different class. Born in Leyden, Gerard Dou he seems in 1628 to have become a pupil of Rembrandt, but he soon developed a very marked style of his own. His favourite subjects are domestic scenes; the mere titles of a few of his pictures tell their own story: *The Grocer's Shop*, *The Dutch Cook*, *The Store-room*, *The Dentist* (repeated three times), *The Herring-seller*, and in our Gallery (No. 825) *The Poulterer's Shop*.

This is an admirable specimen of his work. Notice the truth The Poulterer's Shop to nature of every minute feather on the birds lying on the counter, the fluffy depth of the fur on the suspended hare. What patient precision! It seems almost incredible that such a worker as this should have left behind him over a hundred pictures. Nearly all are quite small, only 6 or 7 inches square, none exceed 2 feet in length or height. *The Dropsical Woman* in the Louvre is reckoned as Dou's masterpiece. The sick woman leaning back in her chair is attended by two others, and the doctor holds up a phial to the sunlight which pours into the room from a window at one side.

Born in the same town Jan Steen was a contrast to Gerard Jan Steen, 1626-1679 Dou. The son of a brewer he seems to have been rich, and was much of a traveller. He had an eye for the comedy of

¹ A second example (No. 2568) has been bequeathed by Mr. Salting.

life, and himself played in it a roistering part. Instead of the uniformly precise work of Gerard Dou, which won immediate recognition and steady prices, we have in Jan Steen much that is slovenly mingled with work of extraordinary power. His range of subject was wider than Dou's, yet he missed popularity and financial success. His irregular life, much of which was spent in taverns, may explain this. But he was a true artist; he had invention, and humour, and a sympathetic understanding of human nature which distinguish him from the mass of more mechanical craftsmen among whom he lived. He had learned his art from Adrian van Ostade (p. 206) and afterwards came under the influence of the poetic painter of landscapes, van Goyen (p. 208) whose daughter he married. After some years of absence from Leyden Jan Steen returned to it about 1658, and during his later years kept an inn himself while still working as a painter.

He must have been industrious despite his intemperate habits, more than 500 pictures being a handsome output for a life which ended at the age of fifty-three. Jan Steen's best work is still in Holland, in public or private collections. His scenes are such as might be witnessed any day and in any country provided we do not quit the company of simple folk. He shows us human nature in the rough; pipes and glasses are among the usual properties on his stage, and the fiddle (an instrument he handles deftly in his portrait of himself) seems to have set the tune to most of his pictured merry-makings. He shows us children, too, and their pretty ways, with an insight possible only to an affectionate nature. In our illustration *Christmas Eve* from the Amsterdam gallery, we get a glimpse of Dutch family life. S. Nicholas is supposed to have sent presents for the good children and tokens of reproof for the naughty ones. One boy in great distress has found a rod in his shoe, while a sister and younger brother laugh hard-heartedly at his tears. The favoured one is the sweet little girl in the foreground, laden with gifts, to whom the mother stretches out expressive, appealing hands. It is this touch of tenderness in his work which led Sir Joshua Reynolds to discover points of affinity between Jan Steen and Raphael. Both saw the purity of girlhood, and the pathos of maternal love.



CHRISTMAS EVE

JAN STEEN

Rijks Museum, Amsterdam



THE STORE CUPBOARD

DE HOOCH

Rijks Museum, Amsterdam

See p. 303

In our Gallery Jan Steen is not well represented: neither *The Music Master* (No. 856) nor *The Terrace Scene* (1421) is truly characteristic; and No. 1378 shows him at his worst.¹

Jan Steen was without followers, but of Gerard Dou's many pupils one of the most famous is Gabriel Metsu. He moved from Leyden his native town in 1655, and settled in Amsterdam where he came under the influence of Rembrandt. His skill as a painter places him in a very high rank, and the more his pictures are studied the more we shall feel their artistic merit. In his chiaroscuro, in his careful blending of colours, above all in his use of white—a difficult matter—Metsu shows himself a master. He chose most of his subjects from high life, and treats them with refined reserve. Some of his best pictures are in the Louvre, but in England we have good examples at Windsor, in the Wallace Collection, and in the National Gallery.

In *The Duet* (No. 838) the daring use of red should be noticed: the scarlet jacket, the paler red skirt, the dark red table-cover. In *The Music Lesson* (No. 839) the general effect is so quietly attractive that the underlying selective art to which it owes its distinction is wholly concealed. But to appreciate its presence we should look at Jan Steen's *Music Master* just below (856). The harsh blue of the player's skirt brings in a jarring note—an error rendered impossible by the infallible good taste of Metsu.

Even more exquisitely—we might almost say affectedly—refined than Metsu is Terborch. He seems able to breathe only in the conventional atmosphere of drawing-rooms. *Young lady in white satin with her back turned*, the title of one of his works in the Dresden gallery, might fit two-thirds of the pictures he has painted. They are astonishingly perfect; and it is only the superfine air of acquired good manners imparted to his figures which robs them of direct truth to nature. He shows us the polished surface of life, never a hint of possible refractory forces at work in the depths below.

¹ A beautiful little picture by Jan Steen, *Grace before Meat* (No. 2558), has been bequeathed by Mr. Salting.

Gabriel
Metsu,
1630-
1667

Gerard
Terborch,
1617-1681

In contrast to Jan Steen's boors we now have dandies. Look at No. 1399 in the National Gallery, *Portrait of a Gentleman*, a marvel of precise, delicate painting. The lace collar, the bows of ribbon at wrist and ankle, the soft puckered lawn of the dainty shirt, are so faultlessly correct that to move one step away from that well-chosen spot between red chair and red table would mean æsthetic ruin. Something of this type must have been Terborch himself. He was born in a small Dutch town (Zwolle), at the age of about fifteen went to Haarlem to study under a little-known master, and after his marriage in 1654 he settled in Deventer, where he died. During his earlier years he visited many foreign countries, and received knighthood from the King of Spain. In 1648 he was present at the memorable Congress of Münster at which Spain officially recognized the independence of the United Provinces.

Congress of
Münster

His picture in the National Gallery of this Congress is considered by some as his masterpiece; but it does not truly represent his style. These plain-coated politicians give no scope to his feeling for colour; his own costume we may notice (for he stands behind the chair of one of the Dutch delegates) is that of a fashionable cavalier. *The Guitar Lesson*, however (No. 864), does give a correct idea of Terborch's most characteristic work. His speciality is satin: no one can excel him in that material. He needs no neighbouring contrasts to accentuate its sheen. In this picture he also achieves a triumph in cool, closely-allied tints; the pale yellow satin jacket is edged with white fur, the white satin skirt is trimmed with pale gold embroidery, and the effect is softly radiant. The lady's hair is a little severe, the fault of fashion, not his; the attitude of the two men is graceful in the extreme and yet not forced; the hand beating time is full of expression. When Terborch paints like this we soon forget his artificiality in the sheer charm of his line, and light, and colour. His pictures are not very numerous; some of the best are in private collections in England.

Adrian van
Ostade,
1610-1685

More closely connected with Haarlem than Terborch are the two van Ostades; they were born, lived, and died in that

town. Adrian, the elder, was a pupil in the studio of Frans Hals, and there he was much influenced by a fellow-pupil (Brouwer) who is famed for his clever but repulsive pictures of intoxicated Dutch peasants. Van Ostade differed in character both from Hals and Brouwer, being himself a temperate and industrious man. He also differed in his choice of subjects. True, he represents low life, and without the touch of endearing sentiment which wins us in the works of Jan Steen. But Adrian van Ostade shows less favour to drunkards, and his merry-makings are as a rule of a blameless, though unattractive kind. A game of skittles, a tavern dance, men smoking, or eating herrings, and playing at cards, these are among the subjects treated. His figures are uncouth and ugly, sometimes deformed; but he shows such great artistic skill in the composition of his pictures, and in his use of colour and chiaroscuro, that he has a great reputation. Some 500 pictures are attributed to him, and in most public galleries there are some examples of his work. There is only one (No. 846) in the National Gallery.

Isaac van Ostade was the younger brother and also the pupil of Adrian. But he was no mere imitator of his brother: he struck out a line of his own, preferring out-door scenes, in which peasant-life assumes its rightful dignity. He is fond in particular of winter landscapes, and has a trick (like Wouwerman) of introducing a white horse into many of his pictures. He died young before his talents were fully developed, but his work was from the first appreciated in England, where many of his pictures are in the possession of private owners. There are four in the National Gallery. *A Frozen River*¹ (No. 963) is particularly charming; its good composition and harmonious colouring make it a real masterpiece.

Isaac van
Ostade,
1621-1644

¹ Now called (on frame) *Frost Scene*.

CHAPTER XXIII

DUTCH LANDSCAPE PICTURES

THE landscape-painters of Holland are as a class more popular in England than the painters of genre. To enter sympathetically into the grotesque proceedings of an alien race necessitates the abandonment of many of our prejudices. But a fine piece of scenery gives equal pleasure in our own land or in another, possibly in the latter case even greater pleasure because of the element in it of novelty.

Jan van
Goyen,
1596-1656

One of the earliest and best Dutch landscape painters is van Goyen, the solitary Leydener in our list. He seems to have owed more to natural gifts than to training. He puts much of himself into his landscapes, and expresses his own temperament in the soft browns and greys which he seems to have preferred to more pronounced colours. He succeeds in creating in us the same mood of peaceful reverie which Nature herself inspires. Two examples in the National Gallery are very characteristic: *A River Scene* (No. 151) with its "dreaming spire," and the faint reflections on the still river, forms a beautiful contrast to *A Winter Scene* (No. 1327) with its ice-grey sense of chill. We should hardly have suspected such an artist as this of having taught the lively Jan Steen. During the later years of his life van Goyen lived at the Hague, where he died in 1656.

Albert
Cuyyp,
1620-1691

More generally known by admirers of Dutch art than van Goyen is Albert Cuyyp (pronounced Kipe). His birth-place was Dordrecht, the picturesque town on the Maas which attracts so many modern artists, and has had its portrait so often painted. It is traversed by canals and by other rivers besides the

Maas, and has often been likened to Venice. Albert Cuyp was one of the first to paint it. His beautiful *View of Dordrecht*, with churches, dwelling-houses, and windmills rising from the water along which glide shapely sailing ships, is now one of the treasures of the Six Collection in Amsterdam.

Cuyp excelled in many departments; he painted portraits, and still life, and interiors with great success. But his chief love seems to have been for the open air, and the varying effects of light as it played over river and canal, and the meadows along their banks. Sometimes we think of him as primarily a cattle-painter, so many are the pictures in which cows and sheep animate the scene. His ships are equally alive, whether full-sailed and reflected on calm water, or closely reefed and fighting with wind and a stormy sea. But he seems to prefer peaceful subjects, and the season of summer, and he fills his pictures with a wonderful golden glow. He is fond too of sunset and catches its mystery. Most of his best pictures are in this country, many of them in private hands. But we cannot hope to see anywhere a more satisfying example of his art than the *Landscape with Cattle and Figures* here reproduced.¹ The quiet scene, bathed in evening light, is instinct with the spirit of the country and the sense of "rest after toil". The picture hangs in the Dulwich Gallery (No. 169), and those who have seen it once will wish to see it again and again. In the Wallace Collection too there are good examples of Cuyp's work and in the National Gallery. The landscape there, known as *Evening* (No. 53), is considered a masterpiece.

Paul Potter is known to popular fame through his *Young Bull* in the gallery at the Hague. This picture has been so often and so enthusiastically described that few visitors to the Hague would venture to neglect its claims to attention. But those who understand fully the importance of Paul Potter's work give greater praise to his smaller pictures. Many of these are full of merit; they represent quiet Dutch out-of-door scenes, and are executed with masterly skill. But they lack the feeling for atmosphere which gives such a charm to the work of

¹ See p. 212.

Paul Potter,
1625-1654

Cuyp. Paul Potter lived much at Amsterdam, though we find him painting sometimes at Delft and sometimes at the Hague. He died young of consumption, and so his works like Isaac van Ostade's may be considered to hold the promise of even higher excellence than that actually attained. We have two small examples in the National Gallery (Nos. 849 and 1009).

Meindert
Hobbema,
1638-1709

Meindert Hobbema, who ranks now among the best landscape painters of Holland, seems to have met with but scanty recognition in his life-time. Our knowledge about him is limited and contradictory, and we can hardly venture to assert more than that he was living in Amsterdam during the latter half of the seventeenth century, and that he died there in poverty in 1709; his grave being in the pauper section of the Westerkirk cemetery. As a painter of merit Hobbema may be said to have been discovered by the English, and many valuable examples of his art are in this country, notably two fine landscapes in Buckingham Palace. The chief interest of his work to the lay picture-lover lies in the minute observation displayed of the every-day features of quiet country scenery. Hobbema paints woods, and forests, and rural cottages, and shows a particular affection for mills. The turning wheel with its broken spray brings a touch of animation into the otherwise rather gloomy landscape. The heavy foliage of his trees is apt to produce this effect, but the faithfully patient rendering of every detail soon engages our interest. Our illustration is from the Ryks Museum, Amsterdam, and this particular *Landscape with a Watermill* is a very fine example of Hobbema's work.¹ He has introduced into it an unusual amount of light, and the red roof to the right and the red-coated man to the left bring in a pleasing touch of bright colour. Other artists painted for him the figures and animals which are occasionally introduced, his own gift being for landscape alone.

There are many good examples of his work in the National Gallery, and *The Avenue, Middelharnis* (No. 830), is one of the finest pictures he ever painted. It is just possible that Middelharnis may have been his birth-place; there is a tradition to that effect. He has certainly painted it as though he loved it.

¹ See p. 252.

This picture is typical of Dutch art. The whole of life's daily round is presented to the imagination: the man with the pruning knife is engaged on his simple task of daily labour, the deep-roofed farm-house suggests the busy house-wife preparing for his home return, the long road links the country with the trade and chaffer of the town; while above, quietly protective, rises the tower of the old church. The grey sky keeps the tone of the picture low; it is set in the key of what Browning calls the "C major of life," the best key for permanent content. We are conscious of the spaciousness and beauty of the earth, and the dignity inherent in the human lot.

Solomon Ruysdael was probably a pupil of van Goyen, as his landscapes are painted in much the same style, and indeed it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the two masters. But Solomon is remembered chiefly as the uncle and probably the instructor of the far more celebrated Jacob Ruysdael.

This painter was trained by his father as a doctor, but his artistic talent was so marked, that he eventually made painting his profession. Very little is known about him accurately, except that he was born and died at Haarlem. Some think he must have travelled a good deal, perhaps even in Norway, because he so often paints wild mountain scenery which is not to be found in Holland. It is especially in his choice of subjects that he differs from Hobbema. He seems to have been attracted by the romantic features of nature rather than by the quiet scenes which satisfied Hobbema. It is easy to recognize his pictures. The majority of them show us pine-trees and crags against a dark sky, and in contrast the dashing foam of a waterfall. Ruysdael seems to have loved gloom for its own sake; and there is a strain of melancholy in his pictures which truthfully interprets the feelings often stirred by the sight of bleak mountain scenery. But he fails to interpret the sense of exultation which is also aroused by the strength and grandeur of mountains;—a feeling which Titian and our English Turner understood. Ruysdael's effects have therefore in them an element of affectation; not unlike the studied romantic melancholy of Byron. They seem impressive at first, but are not

The Avenue

Solomon Ruysdael, 1600 (?) - 1670

Jacob Ruysdael, 1628 or 1629-1682

likely to take a deep hold on our affection. His pictures of simple Dutch scenery have a more lasting attraction. They are indeed so sympathetic and quietly restrained in their rendering of natural scenes that we do not at once realize how full of interest they are. Our illustration shows one of these, *The Windmill on the Beach*, in the Ryks Museum, Amsterdam.

There are many of Ruysdael's pictures in England, no less than fourteen in the National Gallery; perhaps the most pleasing is *A Waterfall* (No. 855).

Of the many marine painters of Holland the two we select for mention are William van de Velde and Jan van de Capelle. Of Cuyp's gifts in this department of painting we have already spoken.

William
van de
Velde the
Elder,
1610-1693

The well-known painter, William van de Velde the younger, was the son of a previous William van de Velde known as the elder, also a marine artist, but of less repute than his son. This elder William was born at Leyden, was in early life a sailor, and seems to have taught himself how to make pencil and chalk sketches of his experiences at sea. He was at length employed by the Dutch Government to make pictures of some of their great sea-fights, at which in his capacity as artist he was obliged to be present. King Charles II. of England invited him in 1675 to this country, and retained him by the grant of a liberal salary to represent English victories instead of Dutch ones. He died in London in 1693.

William
van de
Velde the
Younger,
1633-1707

The younger William was also invited to England by Charles II., and employed to make oil paintings of his father's sketches. He remained in England until his death in 1707. His work was greatly admired and valued at that time; and he executed an immense number of small marine pictures, several thousands of them, which are very naturally not all of equal merit. William van de Velde was a rapid worker, and his little sketches show us a "ship at sea" under every conceivable condition of waves and sky. On the whole, he paints fine weather scenes better than storms, and there is a superficial cleverness shown in his pictures which makes them pleasant to look at. But



LANDSCAPE WITH CATTLE AND FIGURES

CUYP

Dulwich College Gallery

(See p. 209)



THE WINDMILL ON THE BEACH

RUYSDAEL

Rijks Museum, Amsterdam

they never catch the strong terrible mystery of the sea. Matthew Arnold's one line.

"The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea,"

more thrillingly expresses this than a whole roomful of van de Velde's pictures. They may be seen in profusion in the National Gallery; about a dozen of them hang on the walls of Room XII. An interesting large picture by van de Velde called *The Morning Gun* (*Le Coup de Canon*) may be seen in the Wallace Collection (No. 137).

Of the personal history of Jan van de Capelle hardly any-
thing is known. He is supposed to have been painting in ^{Jan van de Capelle} Amsterdam between the years 1650 and 1680, and his pictures are much like those of van de Velde; but they are considered superior in delicacy of treatment and poetic charm. A few winter landscapes painted by this artist are considered specially valuable. Two of these are in England, in private collections, and most of his sea-scapes are also in this country. There are four examples of the latter in the National Gallery.

CHAPTER XXIV

REMBRANDT VAN RHYN

WE now come to the one man of genius in Holland among the many men of talent ; the one supreme artist who overtops the whole multitude of his fellows, Rembrandt van Rhyn. He was at the same time an innovator in the technical treatment of his pictures, and a visionary in the conception of his subjects. We have to remember that Holland as a nation had broken so completely with the past that a temporary paralysis of the higher imagination seems to have ensued.

Rem-
brandt's
originality

Formerly the Church had supplied both guidance and inspiration ; she drew men's thoughts to the ideal subjects which the painters set forth in pictorial form. And since the Renaissance, royal patrons, for the adornment of their luxurious palaces, had supplied another kind of subject—the picturesque mythology of ancient Greece and Rome. But Holland had cut herself off from the Roman Church, and from allegiance to any earthly sovereign. It required great inventive powers, when deprived both of Christian and classic legends, to discover new ideal themes for pictures. But Rembrandt had one source of inspiration left : in the words of Bunyan about Evangelist, “he held the best of books in his hand”. We shall therefore find in Rembrandt's work an entirely original rendering of Bible scenes ; he read the book for himself, selected the subjects which attracted him, and by the exercise of his powerful imagination and his artistic skill he gave them a fresh interpretation.

He aimed at a truthful rendering, and so gave much time to the study of Jewish faces which often appear among his portraits. These he utilized for the characters in his sacred pictures. There is even some attempt to introduce oriental costumes; but as the limited knowledge of the day left him ignorant of the main features of life in the East, there is sometimes a grotesque mingling in his pictures of modern Dutch realism with the scenes already made classic by the art of Italy. Some prejudiced minds feel repelled by this. But on a nearer scrutiny it will be found that Rembrandt always infuses a spirit of poetry into his work which draws us into sympathy with him, and makes us conscious of a new order of "moral" beauty.

By an extraordinary feeling for the charm of light, Rembrandt could achieve visible pictorial effects which have an elevating influence on the mind. He used light as a necromancer would use magic; at one moment to arrest the outward eye, at another to set free the inward forces of thought. His mechanical trick, as we may call it, was to create dazzling centres of light by juxtaposition with intense darkness. Yet so marvellous was his art that he could make his shadows transparent; we can discover faintly what is there; but at the point where the light is focussed we are bound to look. That point is the heart of the picture, and the central thought controlling the whole theme.

With this power over light Rembrandt was able to dispense with the old devices of symbol or halo, which spoke to the intelligence rather than to the feelings. His sacred pictures speak direct to the feelings, and our intelligence may afterwards work out their meaning. For this, no great cleverness is needed, only a knowledge of Bible history, and the spiritual secrets contained in it. They should be very popular with unlettered and simple people.

As an instance of the way in which Rembrandt uses light to emphasize the spiritual significance of his subject, we may mention his *Nativity* at Munich. In so far as he could mentally see the story recorded by S. Luke, he represents it.

His
imaginative
realism

His
use of light

The
Nativity,
1546

Simple peasants finding shelter in a stable, these he shows us quite realistically. We might any day see a similar group entering the casual ward of a workhouse. There is not the least attempt to arouse religious feelings by the device of remoteness, or unusual beauty. There is no pretty fancy, like Correggio's in his Dresden *Notte* (p. 25), of a miraculous light breaking from the body of the child. No angels hover around. A plain story plainly told of two worn-out tramps who have laid their new-born baby in a manger, is all that Rembrandt shows us. And a few ungainly shepherds have just opened the stable door and are peering in. A dull, prosaic rendering, so we should say, of that momentous event, which has changed the course of history, and given new splendour to the destiny of man. But Rembrandt has not forgotten the magic influence of light; the weary Joseph takes down a lantern from a hook on the wall in order to meet the strangers, and at once the face of mother and child grow luminous, and all over the disordered litter of the stable floor there play sudden gleams of brightness. The scene is lifted, as by a miracle, from earth to the region of mystery which borders on heaven.

Birth of
Rem-
brandt,
1606

It is difficult to turn away from Rembrandt the magician to record encyclopædic details about Rembrandt the man. Yet his life is full of pathetic interest. The year 1606 is the generally accepted date of his birth. He was the son of a Leyden burgher of some position and wealth, the owner of a valuable mill on one of the many branches of the Rhine, whose delta has become the low-lying country of Holland. The particular branch which turned that mill is the only one which retains the name of Rhine, and from it Rembrandt's father, Hermann, took the name of "van Rhyn," and the famous son retained it. He was one of a family of seven, and, while his three brothers were brought up to business occupations, his own destination was the university. But his father at length yielded to the boy's invincible bent, and allowed him to be trained as a painter. He studied for three years under a Leyden master, and afterwards entered the school of Pieter Lastman at Am-

Trained
by Pieter
Lastman

sterdam. This artist had studied in Italy, and had directed his attention chiefly to the action of light in its various forms—sunlight, moonlight, candle-light, firelight. Although never attaining success himself as a painter, there is no doubt that Lastman exercised a determining influence over the genius of Rembrandt; and from Lastman he must also have learned the art of engraving.

In 1624, at the age of eighteen, Rembrandt began his real training in the school of Nature. He lived quietly in his home at Leyden and trained himself. He began with etching, and remained at work steadily not only during the whole day, but far into the night. He observed for himself, experimented for himself, and never lost a chance of catching and reproducing any new type of face. For it was the human face, especially as a medium of expression, to which he devoted his most attentive study. He made use of his own; and would sit before a glass performing face exercises to correspond with every phase of feeling. Anger, fear, contempt, laughter, he would go through them all and get them reproduced with the brush or on his etching plate. Of the numerous completed portraits of himself which have come down to us, many were mere studies of the head in different lights and with different accessories. They are therefore of very unequal merit, although interesting as examples of his method of work.

Rembrandt's earliest known oil-paintings date from the year 1627. They are not remarkable, but show a freer style than that of other Dutch artists, and in all there is proof of the painter's love of light. In spite of his singular plan of educating himself, he soon won the confidence of other students, and Gerard Dou became his pupil in 1628. Two years later his father died; and in 1631 he moved to Amsterdam, the rich, populous capital, where work was to be found and money earned.

Although only twenty-four, he soon received important commissions, and had a band of pupils gathered round him. It is said that he kept each of them at work in a separate small room, so that their individuality might be preserved and

strengthened ; a wise arrangement when we think how vacillating are the early steps in any art, and how readily the tyro seeks support from the nearest prop.

Marriage,
1634

Very soon, during the course of the next two years, Rembrandt produced one of his best-known pictures, *The School of Anatomy*, of which a fuller notice is deferred (p. 221). In 1634 he married Saskia van Uylenborch, who brought eight years of happiness into his life. He painted many portraits of her, the one chosen for our illustration being a special favourite with all who have seen it in the gallery at Cassel. She is dressed in specially beautiful clothes, nearly all being of warm shades of red which are becoming to her fair skin and dark hair. Her hat is red with a plume of white feathers in it ; her dress is of ruby-red velvet, while pretty sleeves of faintly striped greenish grey project from beneath it, and above is a dull brocaded collar of a bluer shade of grey. Round her neck and wrists, and even in her hair, gleam beautiful jewels, and she holds in her hand a sprig of rosemary. This is one of Rembrandt's most beautiful portraits.

Saskia's
portrait at
Cassel

Although perfectly happy in his marriage Rembrandt was not free from serious troubles and anxieties ; besides the loss of several children, and in 1640 of Rembrandt's mother, there was the constant, harassing, perplexing insufficiency of money. This was not due to any failure in industry, for Rembrandt was at work all day. His paintings were in request, and for that date, they obtained good prices. Saskia too had brought him a small fortune, but money was always scarce. It is true that he bought jewels—extremely fine ones—to hang round her neck ; but he loved her, and nothing was too good for her. He was always ready—to him a natural impulse—to make a loan to any of his friends in distress. And he had a way of bestowing his etchings (which now command thousands of pounds) on any casual visitor who might express a liking for them. But when the bills came in, why there was no money to pay them with seems to have remained a puzzle to him to the end. The brothers of Saskia were sharp business men, and they watched their brother-in-law with suspicious eyes. Saskia,



PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF

REMBRANDT

National Gallery, London



PORTRAIT OF SASKIA

REMBRANDT

Royal Collection, Copenhagen

knowing him, had made a remarkable will after the birth of her last child, Titus. Although ostensibly this boy was her heir, she left everything virtually to her husband; with the one proviso, that, in the event of a second marriage, her half of their joint property should be put in trust for her child, while Rembrandt was still to enjoy the interest during his lifetime. If Rembrandt had at once declared the value of Saskia's property and settled it legally on Titus, his future troubles might have been avoided.

In 1642, the year of Saskia's death, he painted his celebrated picture, *The Night-Watch* (p. 221), and through it gave unintentional offence, and entirely lost the favour of his Amsterdam public. One patron, who really valued his work, the Stadtholder of Holland, Prince Frederick-Henry, continued to give him commissions, and for a time the impending ruin was postponed.

In 1647 the brothers-in-law grew anxious, and asked to be informed of the amount of property due to Titus. Rembrandt boastfully named a sum nearly twice what it really was; a piece of folly which cost him dear. In 1649 rumours were heard of a secret connection between Rembrandt and one Hendrickje Stoffels. No data have yet been found which prove a legal marriage; but as twenty years later the property of Titus was claimed in accordance with the terms of the will, we infer that a second marriage did take place. If so, it can have been to no other than the faithful Hendrickje; she bore him a daughter in 1654 and proved a true mother to the young Titus. But she came too late into Rembrandt's life to save him from ruin.

In 1656 he was declared bankrupt; his house and all the pictures and engravings and rare jewels which he had collected were sold by public auction, and for a quite inadequate sum. Rembrandt at fifty years of age was homeless, and had to begin the fight for daily bread all over again. For Titus part of the property had been retained, and his interests were protected by a public guardian. Then Hendrickje and Titus formed a plan for the help and protection of the unfortunate Rembrandt. They united their common funds, and started a kind of shop

Saskia's
will

Death of
Saskia,
1642

Hendrickje
Stoffels

Bank-
ruptcy,
1656

for the sale of artistic objects. The partnership was legally ratified, and each was to share equally in the profits. Rembrandt who alone had the requisite knowledge for making wise purchases had no monetary advantage from the arrangement, but he received board and lodging in return for his services. This was the only way in which a home could be re-established, and he consented. A few friends had stood by him in his time of trouble, and they procured him occasional commissions. In 1661 an important one was entrusted to him, and Rembrandt painted *The Syndics of the Drapers* (see p. 222). After this the gloom which overshadowed his life grew deeper. It is thought that he was threatened with blindness. No engravings are found of a later date than 1661, yet for these there was a readier sale than for his pictures. No doubt the close, fine work, carried on, too, by artificial light, had injured his eyes. It is noticed that in his later portraits there are defects of proportion which may be attributed to this cause.

Death of
Hendrickje
Stoffels,
1661 or
1662

In 1661 or 1662 he lost Hendrickje, the devoted and capable guardian of his home. She left her property to her daughter Cornelia, but she entrusted it to the management of Titus (now twenty), with instructions that his father was to benefit by the interest of it so long as he lived. Again no actual proof of her death exists any more than of her marriage. Of the remaining years of the life of Rembrandt very little is known. Titus on reaching twenty-one received what was left of his property. In 1668 he married, but before the end of the year was dead. Early in 1669 his wife gave birth to a daughter, and Rembrandt was present at the baptism of his only grandchild.

Death of
Rem-
brandt,
1669

In the autumn of that year Rembrandt's troubled life came to a close; and the greatest artist of the world—neglected, sorrow-stricken, misunderstood—was buried obscurely and cheaply in the Westerkirk at Amsterdam.

His
pictures

Of the five hundred and odd pictures attributed to Rembrandt it is impossible to mention more than a very few. Of his etchings, quite miraculous at times in their fidelity to nature, and the way in which they pulsate with light, we must refrain



THE SCHOOL OF ANATOMY
OF VESALIUS

altogether to speak. His oil-painting which has attained the greatest celebrity among the travelling public is *The School of Anatomy* in the Royal Gallery at the Hague. The School of Anatomy,
1632

It belongs to Rembrandt's first period, and was painted soon after he had settled in Amsterdam. It was usual in Holland—after the dissection of human bodies had been legalized—to have in every town one special hall (in straightforward Dutch, the “cutting-room”) where demonstrations were held for the instruction of students. In that room it was also usual to hang portraits of the leading members of the local “Surgeons’ Guild”. The Dutch had a craze for portrait groups, and exceedingly dull productions they most of them are. But this is an exception. Rembrandt has created a picture: the dead body, foreshortened and much in shade, is the centre of interest. From it the lecturer has just removed a muscle which he exhibits and explains. The other doctors direct their gaze either at the corpse or the lecturer’s hand. Two—possibly three—look inattentive. This is due to Rembrandt’s conscientious wish to make good portraits, and he gives us eight powerful, intellectual heads, each in itself full of extreme interest. But there is a certain want of concentration, and so the picture fails to achieve artistic unity. There is certainly the suggestion of a central point of interest towards which every other detail in the picture should converge, but this suggestion is not completely realized.

Ten years later Rembrandt undertook a similar commission, and this time his feeling for artistic effect made him oblivious of the personal vanity of his sitters. He produced a picture, one of his most famous, known as *The Night-Watch*, or more correctly *The Sortie of the Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq*. The Night Watch,
1642 The work of Rembrandt was to paint individual portraits of Captain Cocq and his officers, but he has done full justice only to the captain and one lieutenant. These two are in the foreground fully illuminated by Rembrandt’s marvellous light. The others are in various animated attitudes likely to occur as they came hurriedly together before the order of march had been established. A girl holding a cock (thought to be the

prize to be competed for) is also shown in a strong light. But the remaining faces are in shadow, and some hardly visible at all. It is a striking picture, but the men who had subscribed their guilders in order to see themselves glorified in paint, felt defrauded. The reputation of Rembrandt as a popular artist was ruined. His failure in tact had lost him the custom of Amsterdam. The name *Night-Watch*¹ seems to have arisen because years of neglect at last resulted in a grimy darkening of the picture. Careful restoration shows that the scene was intended to take place by daylight, that form of unearthly chiaroscuro daylight which Rembrandt loved. The picture now hangs in such a position that on entering the Ryks Museum at Amsterdam it can be seen far away through the open doors of a series of rooms, and the effect is very powerful.

The
Syndics,
1661

But it was in 1661, after disgrace and poverty had fallen upon him, and premature old age had whitened his head, that he painted his greatest picture, *The Syndics of the Drapers*. This order we remember was procured for him by a faithful friend, and here he has at last solved the problem of transforming a group of portraits into a picture. Here he has achieved unity, and dramatic interest, and truth to nature. Extreme simplicity is the prevailing note of this picture; a red oriental table-cover, brown panelling behind, plain black coats with white collar, and the flesh tint of the faces supply all the necessary colour. They are so skilfully and subtly blended that a soft general tone of golden brown suffuses the whole picture. It hangs in the Ryks Museum at Amsterdam, and is considered to be Rembrandt's masterpiece. Yet we may venture to maintain that, however superior from the artistic point of view its rank may be—from the point of view of human interest *The School of Anatomy* exerts a greater power. It is only a specialized taste that can prefer these tame drapers, engaged—so we imagine—in the discussion of accounts, to those keen “brainy” doctors at the moment of apprehending a thrilling scientific truth.

Portraits of
himself

Rembrandt's portraits of himself are exceedingly numerous.

¹ A copy of this by Lundens (No. 289) is in the National Gallery.

We can follow him through every stage of life, from the time when, young and handsome, he won the love of Saskia, to the last forlorn period of old age when the portraits of him are almost too painful to look on. We mention a few of the best known self-portraits. In the Glasgow gallery he appears as a young man of unusual beauty of countenance, with masses of wavy brown hair hanging down to the shoulders, and a dark velvet cap over-shadowing his forehead. In the Pitti Gallery in Florence hangs a very favourite portrait. We see him still young, and with a bright, alert look on his face. He wears a flat black velvet cap and a black cloak, while across a shining steel gorget glitters a gold chain. The date of the picture is 1635—one year after his marriage with Saskia.

Our most valuable and beautiful portrait (No. 672) shows him in the prime of life, at the age of thirty-two, still happy in the home irradiated by the presence of Saskia. It is dated 1642.

Our second portrait (No. 221) is dated 1664 and shows us Rembrandt after the death of Hendrickje, a man verging on sixty, and of decidedly unpleasant appearance. The folded hands are pathetic; they had not lost their cunning, he worked on valiantly even into later years. But the attitude suggests the curbing of their former vehement activity, the acceptance of thwarted purposes and unaccomplished hopes.

Last scene of all, that ends this strange eventful history, we have in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, a picture of Rembrandt painted in 1668 which shows him with a rough, swollen, furrowed face such as we can hardly recognize. There is a haggard look in the large eyes which is infinitely sad; yet the mouth is set with an air of resolution that gives assurance of a continued power of fight against the shocks of adverse Fate. It was in the next year that he died.

One word more about No. 672, which has been chosen as our illustration, page 218. Not only is it interesting as a portrait, but we may notice in it one of the distinguishing features of Rembrandt's work as a painter—his subtle and subdued employment of colour. Working up from the dark brown cloak hanging over the bar, we rise to the greener brown of the

sleeve, faintly striped ; then the deep brown of the velvet coat, trimmed with a lighter tone of fur and opening over a soft greyish green waistcoat. Passing up over the soft white shirt front we reach a beautiful line of pure colour in the yellow collar ; and yet not quite pure, small dots of blue check the exuberance of its tone. Above that come the flesh tints, the clear brown eyes, the seal-brown velvet cap, and shining faintly in front is a jewelled button. The quiet background of greenish grey forms a perfect setting to the figure.

On Rembrandt's other pictures in the Gallery we cannot speak in detail, but our store both here and at the Wallace is abundant and varied. We should not be content with merely observing the technical excellence of Rembrandt's work, and especially his clever chiaroscuro ; we should look deeper into these faces so marvellously interpreted for us by the exercise of imaginative sympathy. Rembrandt is above all a seer of things unseen ; a searcher into the guarded fastnesses of the human heart. Like Michelangelo he probes its most painful secrets. But with Rembrandt there is no bitterness,—only pathos. To him darkness serves but as a foil to unquenchable light.

Very strikingly characteristic of this power is the *Christ at Emmaus* of our illustration. The type of face is ordinary, even rough ; yet we are strangely moved. Rembrandt painted this in a time of sorrow, soon after Saskia's death, and his own grief is worked into the peasant face of the Christ. The halo, so often used merely as a symbol, here adds intensity to the inward force of expression. Rembrandt shows us the majesty inherent in every human soul. The Christ whom his own soul had found and visualized is depicted here as in very truth the Son of Man.

Deriving directly from Rembrandt—we have Jacob Maris (1837-1899) and his brother Matthew Maris (1839-1917), artists of capacity and original power. Note *The Drawbridge* (N.G., No. 2710). Joseph Israels (1824-1911) paints sympathetic renderings of the toil and the hardships of Dutch fisher folk. And the work of Anton Mauve (1838-88), who paints out-door scenes of country life, has always a quiet charm. A short notice of Van Gogh is in Appendix A.



CHRIST AT EMMAUS

REMBRANDT

Louvre, Paris

CHAPTER XXV

THE SPANISH SCHOOL OF PAINTING

IN mediæval times there was no Spain. As a nation and kingdom she appeared late upon the stage of History, when already in Italy and Flanders the art of painting had reached its zenith. The story of Spain is unique.

After the death of Mohammed in 632 the great tide of Saracen conquests swept continuously westward along the northern shores of Africa, until in 698 the Atlantic was reached. Only the narrow Straits of Gibraltar lay between victorious Islam and Southern Europe.

In 713, under their leader, Tarik, a further advance was made, and the first spot where he planted his foot on European soil is known to this day as Gebel el Tarik (the rock of Tarik), now contracted to Gibraltar. His followers, no longer known by the name of Arabs, or Saracens, are familiar in European history as Moors. After quickly subjugating the entire peninsula, they crossed the unavailing Pyrenees; and in 732 poured down like a devastating flood into the plains of Southern Gaul.

In that same year Charles Martel, the deputy of the Frankish king, withstood them and defeated them at Tours. This memorable battle, prolonged during a whole week, decided the fate of Europe. Mohammedanism was routed, and never again emerged from behind the barrier of the Pyrenees. But the Western Kaliphate, embracing nearly the whole peninsula and having its seat of government at Cordova, became prosperous and powerful. In the extreme north, in the fastnesses of

A.D. 632,
Death
of Moham-
med

713. The
Moors in
Spain

Battle of
Tours, 732

the mountains, a few small Christian communities survived, and gradually, inch by inch, fought their way southward. Kings arose among them, and little kingdoms struggled into life. In the south under the Moors the land was well cultivated, beautiful cities arose, and science and art flourished; but in the north material progress was delayed by the determination of the Christians to win back their old territories by the sword. In those early centuries there was no hope for the rise of a native school of art.

Kingdoms
of Castile
and
Aragon

At last in the fifteenth century, the epoch of the world's new birth, there arose in the Spanish peninsula the two strongest leaders whose work it was to create a nation. The many little kingdoms of the foregoing centuries of struggle had become consolidated into two, Castile and Aragon. In the one the Princess Isabella, under the careful guardianship of her mother, was growing in gentleness and wisdom; in the other Prince Ferdinand was learning from his aged father the secrets of successful rule.

Marriage
of Ferdi-
nand and
Isabella,
1469

In 1469 by the marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand—she nineteen and he eighteen years of age—the foundations were laid of a future union between the two kingdoms. In 1474, Isabella became Queen of Castile and in 1479 Ferdinand became King of Aragon. A formal union of the two crowns followed, and, by the conquest of the Moorish kingdom of Granada in 1492, the Christian kingdom of Spain came into possession of nearly the whole territory now bearing that name.

Conquest
of
Granada,
1492

The sacred war, as it was considered, against the infidel Moors had lasted ten years, and during that time the enforced political union of Castile and Aragon had become a gladly recognized reality. It was this war which created both the Spanish nation and the formidable Spanish army which afterwards proved its mettle in the Netherlands and Germany.

Discovery
of America,
1492

In the same year of 1492 Columbus discovered the New World, and the gold of Mexico and Peru soon enriched the Government coffers of Spain. The country had entered on its brilliant career as one of the leading Powers of Europe. Still however, it had no native school of art; but there was a wish

to vie in splendour with other civilized countries, and artists from Flanders and Italy became the tutors of the Spaniards.

Although the art of Spain was thus fostered, we might even more correctly say created, by the influence of foreigners, it has some marked characteristics of its own. Perhaps the most striking are the prevailing gloom from which so few Spanish pictures are free, and the tendency to depict with unflinching realism those sordid and repulsive aspects of life which but few can think it desirable to embody in art. Both these unlovely qualities in the work of Spanish painters may be traced to the same malignant source of influence—the Inquisition.

Through the mistaken piety of Isabella this secret court for the discovery and eradication of heresy was introduced in 1481 into Spain. It was against the Jews and the Moors that its earliest activities were directed; but every thinking Christian was equally in danger of becoming an object of suspicion. Then would follow the sudden arrest, the question by torture, and the secret condemnation to death at the stake, or the more lingering torment of an Inquisition prison-cell. Under this ecclesiastical Reign of Terror the warlike valour of the Spaniard hardened into cruelty; and the frequent sight of processions of heretics, grotesquely garbed in “san Benitos!” and led with solemn psalms of rejoicing to their fiery death, created in the spectators a growing taste for the horrible. These Acts of Faith (*autos de fé*) are thus satirized by Voltaire: “An Asiatic, arriving at Madrid on the day of an *auto de fé*, would doubt whether it were a festival, religious celebration, sacrifice, or massacre;—it is all of them”. The historian Prescott tells us that over ten thousand were burned during the terrible eighteen years when Torquemada was chief inquisitor; and the average per year of convicted persons (not all being favoured with death) amounted to six thousand.

The art cradled in such conditions as these could know nothing of the tenderness, the freedom, the ecstasy which thrill us in the best work of other schools. The Spaniard painted as a rule with a slavish observance of the instructions laid down by the Inquisition; or, if at any time he dared to be free, his

Character-
istics of
Spanish
Art

The
Spanish
Inquisition

hand found pleasure in representing the mutilations and burnings of heretics on which his imagination had been taught to dwell.

The School
of Andalusia

Early Spanish painters are generally classified in three schools, the Andalusian, the Valencian, and the Castilian; or, as it is called later, the School of Madrid. Although Juan Sanchez de Castro, living in the first part of the fifteenth century, is sometimes called the "Morning Star of Andalusia," yet it is Luis de Vargas, born in 1502, who rightly deserves to be regarded as the founder of that school which culminated in Murillo.

Luis de
Vargas,
1502-1568

De Vargas received his training as an artist in Italy and in that country spent the greater part of his life. But before his death he returned to Seville and introduced the Italian methods of painting in fresco and oil. He has left some interesting pictures, rich in colour, and showing considerable power of dramatic composition. One of the best known is his *Nativity* in Seville Cathedral.

Francisco
Zurbaran,
1598-1662

Far more interesting than De Vargas is Francisco Zurbaran, because his work owes nothing to the influence of foreigners. He was of peasant extraction and was born in the high lands of Estremadura. Early signs of talent led his father to send him down to the studio in Seville of las Roelas the pioneer of naturalism. The boy made rapid progress, his style from the first being simple and bold, and in all his work there is evidence of a close observation of nature. Of retiring habits Zurbaran would probably have remained contented all his days in Seville, and worked for the churches and convents in the neighbourhood. But in 1650 his influential friend Velazquez obtained a post for him in the king's service, and Zurbaran moved to Madrid, where he died in 1662.

Contrast
between
Italian and
Spanish
ideals

The critics of his work regard it as typical of the two main tendencies which dominate Spanish art,—“mysticism and realism”. But the mysticism of Spanish art is strongly ascetic; it reflects the teaching of S. Dominic, who according to the legend rolled out of his cradle when an infant to seek a harsher couch upon the floor. Its conception of religious ardour is self-mortification, a militant annihilation of all the in-

instincts of the natural man rather than their purification through the influx of spiritual energy. A monk of Fra Angelico should be contrasted with a monk by Zurbaran in order to realize fully how the Italian conception of "mysticism" differs from the Spanish.

Zurbaran was a fine painter, and our own examples in the National Gallery are so excellent that there is no need to enumerate others. *The Franciscan Monk* (No. 230) shows us the combined "mysticism and realism" in Spanish art, and the boldness of the execution shows us the power of Zurbaran as a painter.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

In the portrait of *A Lady as S. Margaret* (No. 1920) we see his gift for portraiture, a department of art in which, almost involuntarily it would seem, he has done some of his best work. When comparing it with the neighbouring *Nativity* and the sunburnt skins of the peasants we shall bear in mind that the lady's complexion is artificial. A white skin was the recognized characteristic of high rank, and, when not a gift of nature, was acquired by those aids to the toilet which have been known in every age. Zurbaran gives us the lady as she wished us to see her; his power is shown in the vividness of the representation.

This *Nativity* has given rise to a controversy which is still active. The catalogue¹ attributes it to Zurbaran, but many sound critics maintain that it is an early work by Velazquez. Those who are acquainted with Zurbaran's best work in Spain have never seen anything like this. If he really painted it, all are agreed that this is his masterpiece. Whoever the painter, this is an admirable example of purely Spanish art; nothing in the least like it can be discovered in any other part of the gallery. Piety and homeliness are mingled, but there is no hint of the grotesque which so often startles us in early German pictures. In spite of its pronounced realism there is a certain dignity in all the rough faces which brings them into harmony with the sacredness of the theme.

The
Nativity,
No. 232

The very dark ugly shepherd who kneels before the Babe,

¹ The catalogue of 1921 attributes this picture to the "Spanish School".

with clasped wrinkled hands, is just such a one as might be seen any day in the streets of Seville. "Goth and Moor and Jew in one," would perhaps explain his odd appearance. The old woman's face above has a certain comeliness, and the Virgin with the finer-cut features of an aristocrat is almost beautiful. The realistic lambs in the foreground, the basket of rolls and the outstretched gift from the poultry-yard remind us of the art of Holland. But the figure of Joseph is essentially Spanish in its quiet dignity and the Child could have been born in no other land than Spain. The prevailing tone of the picture is brown, but the touches of red and green in the draperies of the Virgin and the kneeling peasant are a source of pleasant relief.

Francisco
Pacheco,
1571-1654

Two other names of interest connected with the Andalusian School are those of Francisco Pacheco and Herrera the Elder. The former, a third-rate painter, is remembered chiefly for his art treatise called the *Arte de la Pintura* from which much curious information may be gathered about art-ideals in Spain. Pacheco was appointed by the Inquisition as inspector of sacred pictures, and was thus able to impose many restrictions on the freedom of artists. He had an academy in Seville where many were trained, among them the celebrated Velazquez.

Herrera
the Elder,
1576-1656

Herrera is also remembered chiefly for the part he played in the education of Velazquez. His own work is of its kind very powerful. But he was a gloomy and violent man, it is indeed probable that there was a strain of madness in him, and the large frescoes which he painted with furious rapidity arouse astonishment rather than admiration. All his best work is in Seville.

The
Valencian
School

The best-known painters of Valencia are the two Ribaltas, father and son, and Joseph de Ribera. It was this school which first adopted the Italian methods of painting, and laid stress on the importance of a visit to Italy and careful study of the masterpieces of the Renaissance.

Francisco
de Ribalta,
1550 (?) -
1628

The elder Ribalta formed his style on that of Raphael, but certainly not on the style of those earlier works, so attractive through their simplicity, which were painted, as Ruskin expresses it, when Raphael was "young and heaven-taught". Ribalta

preferred the copyists of Raphael, the Carracci (p. 130), and his paintings are therefore devoid of originality and life, although technically successful. He is chiefly valued as an historical painter, and to form a just estimate of his merits he should be studied in his native town of Valencia. There is an interesting altar-piece by him, a *Crucifixion*, in Magdalen Chapel, Oxford. The younger Ribalta (Juan) would probably have surpassed his father, but he too died in 1628, at the age of thirty-one.

Joseph de Ribera was born near the town of Valencia in 1588, and was destined by his parents for one of the learned professions. But his bent for painting was so strong that he wilfully forsook the university for the studio of Ribalta. He soon found his way to Italy, and nearly died from starvation in the streets of Rome. This rude school of experience taught him to look with scorn on the soft ideal paintings of the Eclectics (see p. 130). Ribera was more attracted by the work of Caravaggio (1569-1609), a painter of the Roman School who had led a re-action against the Eclectics, and maintained the importance of direct observation of nature. Caravaggio's work was eccentric, and he loved especially the violent juxtaposition of extreme light and shade which reminds us of Rembrandt. When at last Ribera, through the kindness of a discerning cardinal who housed and fed him, was able to begin his studies in earnest, he joined the ranks of the "Naturalists," and strove to outvie in extravagance the work of his favourite master. Very soon he moved to Naples, where he held the position of court-painter to the Spanish viceroy, and acquired great influence and wealth. Ribera was known in Italy as *Lo Spagnoletto* (the little Spaniard), and his influence was felt through the whole peninsula. He died at Naples in 1656.

His work is considered by connoisseurs as really valuable and certainly the best of the so-called "naturalist" school. His technique is admirable and his colour good. But he delighted in horrors, the flaying of S. Bartholomew being a favourite subject; and his unrelenting realism omits nothing.

Examples of Ribera's work may be seen in nearly every gallery in Europe, but his masterpiece is a *Deposition from*

Joseph de
Ribera,
1588-1656

His
pictures

the Cross in a convent in Naples. It is free from the extravagances which he so often affects, and the restraint and repose of the grouped figures, combined with a sincere vein of pathos, make the picture specially impressive. There is a good Ribera in the Dulwich Gallery and there are two in the National Gallery. The *Pietà* (No. 235) is an excellent example, characteristic both of the master and Spanish art generally. To feel the difference between Spanish and Italian art this should be compared with the beautiful Francia (No. 180).

The
Castilian
School

Belonging to the Castilian School are those artists of the sixteenth century who lived in the various towns of the great central plateau of Spain: Toledo, Badajoz, Valladolid, and others. When Philip II. selected his new capital and began in 1563 the building of his palace, the Escorial, a new era set in for painting. After this the painters of Northern Spain gravitated to Madrid.

El Greco,
1548 (?) -
1625

The most prominent name of the Castilian School is that of Theotocopuli, commonly known as El Greco (the Greek). Little is known about his early years except that he was born in Crete, and that he studied in Venice under Titian. He was for some years in Rome, and his work is spoken of with much enthusiasm by an Italian writer of the time. He arrived in Spain somewhere about 1577, and settled at Toledo. Pacheco knew him and says of him that he was "in all things as singular as his paintings". El Greco painted a large number of pictures, and there is an astonishing difference between those executed in Italy and those dating from his sojourn in Toledo. Gradually he abandoned the bright colouring of the Italians, and adopted a cold grey tone which some attribute to the influence of the barren scenery of central Spain. He painted truthfully what he saw, and his admirers number him among the faithful students of nature whose realism marks the later development of art in Spain. But his pictures are "singular," as Pacheco remarks, because of the strangely elongated figures and faces which appear in nearly all of them.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

We have two examples, *S. Jerome* (1122) and *Christ and the Traders* (1457), from which a fair opinion can be formed of his style.

CHAPTER XXVI

VELAZQUEZ AND MURILLO

ALTHOUGH born late and very rapid in its decline, the Spanish School has given to the world one of the greatest painters. Diego de Silva y Velazquez reigns now on an undisputed throne, and has the art-world at his feet. He is the painters' painter, and nearly every known problem of actual craftsmanship has been faced by him and triumphantly mastered. He excels chiefly in portraits, and so forceful and vivid are they that it has been said of him that he transferred the living features to his canvas by sheer force of will.

Velazquez, born at Seville in 1599, was destined by his father, a man of fortune and culture, for one of the learned professions. But the boy's natural bent soon appeared, and he was apprenticed first to Herrera the Elder. The eccentric and violent habits of this master soon led to a separation, and Velazquez passed on to the studio of Pacheco. No precocious brilliance seems to have marked these early years; we only know that he showed that "infinite capacity for taking pains," which in itself is genius. From a third master, a pupil of El Greco, he must have caught the liking for those cold grey tones already spoken of which suggest a kinship of taste between Velazquez and the Greek. But Nature taught subtler lessons than any of these three, the young painter observed closely and worked from the life, and may be considered, like Rembrandt, to have virtually trained himself. In 1618 he married the daughter of Pacheco, and for several years lived and worked contentedly in Seville. He painted, as others did, religious pictures, but betrayed a preference for more realistic subjects.

Born at
Seville,
1599

Marriage,
1618

Accession
of Philip
IV., 1621

In 1621 died Philip III., and with the reign of Philip IV. began a new era. Pacheco had friends in Madrid, he had a great opinion of his son-in-law's gifts, and in 1623 Velazquez was sent for by the powerful minister, Olivarez, and soon became court-painter to the youthful king.

Rubens in
Madrid,
1628

In 1628 Rubens visited the court of Spain (see p. 156) and, although no signs of direct influence can be traced in the work of Velazquez, it is thought that his intercourse with the famous Fleming bore fruit in a development of power. A very strong realistic picture, *The Toppers*, now in the Prado, belongs to this year; and in 1629, no doubt on the advice of Rubens, Velazquez set forth for Italy.

First visit
to Italy,
1629

He travelled in company with Spinola, the great Genoese captain, who had just returned from that victorious campaign in the Netherlands in which the Surrender of Breda formed so splendid an incident. Neither could then foresee how their names would be linked, and together commemorated, in a picture whose fame swells with advancing years. Velazquez stayed in Venice, where Tintoretto moved him more profoundly than Titian; a year in Rome seems to have nearly won him over to the theories of the Eclectics; and a short visit to Naples led to a friendship with Ribera which is thought to have exercised some influence over his own style.

In 1631 Velazquez returned to Madrid, and a fine series of pictures, marked by a steadily growing mastery over his art, is assigned to the years which lie between this first visit to Italy and a second in 1648. The majority of these are portraits: of Philip, of the queen, of Olivarez and other notabilities, of various unpleasant dwarfs and idiots attached as curiosities to the court of Spain; and, in striking contrast to these, of the winsome young heir to the throne, Don Baltazar Carlos.

Don
Baltazar
Carlos

This boy, destined to die young, was the pride of his father's heart, and an object of enthusiastic affection to all who knew him. Velazquez painted him from the age of two upwards, and with no other little prince in history can we form so close

a visual intimacy. He died at the age of seventeen in 1646, but he lives for ever in the portraits of Velazquez.

In 1648 for a second time the court-painter visited Italy. His stay was prolonged for nearly three years, and during the jubilee celebrations in 1650 he was in Rome. There he painted his marvellous picture of Innocent X., one of those miracles of portraiture which he seemed to "will" on to the canvas. It is now in the Doria Palace at Rome.

In 1651 Velazquez returned to Madrid, and at his own request was appointed to the office of "Aposentador Mayor," or grand-marshal of the palace. He had long acted as art adviser to the king, and the arrangement of the pictures and decorations of the Escorial and other palaces had been superintended by the court-painter. Now his duties would extend to the supervision of every form of court ceremonial and entertainments.

In 1660, after many years of war, the Treaty of the Pyrenees was concluded with France, and a marriage arranged between Philip's eldest daughter, Maria Theresa, and Louis XIV. A meeting of the two monarchs was to take place on the frontier; and vast were the preparations required for the progress through the country of the Spanish court, and their stay for three weeks in the little town of San Sebastian. There the Infanta was handed over to her future husband, who, though expressing himself as "appalled at her costume," vowed that she was "beautiful and would be easy to love". Throughout the slow, difficult progress from Madrid, a matter of about a month's duration, it was Velazquez who was responsible for the royal comfort and dignity at every halting-place. During the three weeks at San Sebastian it was his forethought and contrivance which maintained the Spanish traditions of magnificence, and devised masques and pageants in honour of the great occasion. Ennobled in the previous year by admission to the Order of Sant' Iago, Velazquez also played a prominent part in the negotiations between the two courts. His handsome face and splendid attire attracted the special notice of the chronicler of that historic meeting; he wore a silver-

Second
visit to
Italy, 1648

Appointed
"Aposen-
tador
Mayor,"
1651

Royal
progress to
San Sebas-
tian, 1660

braided suit, and a cloak with the red cross on it of his Order of knighthood; a silver-hilted sword hung at his side, and a gold chain about his neck. It is as a stately grandee of Spain that Velazquez bids farewell to the stage of life.

Death at
Madrid,
1660

Broken with fatigue he returned to Madrid only to die. The faithful wife who had secured to him the peace of a happy home survived him but seven days. The king made no secret of his great affection and his grief. The life led by Velazquez must have been regular and strenuous; like Rubens, although he shone in court circles, he seems to have found his happiness in the society of wife and children, while to his art he devoted the full energy of an acutely observant mind.

Chief
works

The pictures of Velazquez are classified as a rule in the three main periods of development we have noticed in his life. Unfortunately for us in England the best of these are in Madrid, and no just estimate can be formed of the greatness of Velazquez without visiting that city.

Portrait of
Don Baltazar
Carlos.

Among the most interesting pictures in the Prado Gallery are the portraits of Philip's idolized son and heir. The one given in our illustration represents him in hunting dress standing between his two dogs. Erect, with gun in hand, his air of quiet importance contrasts well with the eagerness of the dogs. The crouching one can hardly control his impatience another moment; the speaking eyes of the other ask for an immediate command. Only a supreme artist can suggest this thrill of life, and the "Little Sportsman" has many lovers.

The
Surrender
of Breda

This is one of the great pictures of the world, the finest purely historical picture in existence. It was painted to commemorate a victory very dear to the pride of the Spaniards. In the long war with the Netherlands (lasting intermittently until 1628) Breda, a frontier town of great strategic importance, had often changed hands. Finally, in 1625, when garrisoned by the Dutch under Prince Justin of Nassau, the Genoese captain, Spinola, determined to re-capture it for Spain. For one year the brave garrison held out, and then Justin was forced to sue for terms. This was Spinola's moment of



PRINCE BALTAZAR CARLOS
VELAZQUEZ



THE INFANTA MARGARITA
VELAZQUEZ



THE SURRENDER OF FREDA

supreme glory: he granted honourable terms, allowed the vanquished to march out armed and with flying colours, and praised, with generous courtesy, the gallantry of his defeated foe. In the picture we see Justin of Nassau, a pathetic figure, delivering up the keys of the city; while Spinola, with uncovered head and a look of ineffable tenderness, lays a hand on the Prince's shoulder. We remember that Velazquez had travelled with Spinola to Italy in 1629, and may have heard from his own lips the story of the siege. He had the opportunity of studying the features of the noble Italian commander, and paints him as though he loved him.

Behind Spinola rises the forest of lances from which the picture has received its popular name of *Las Lanzas*. They are strikingly decorative, and they emphasize, as one critic has suggested, the perfect military discipline of the Spanish army. The confused variety of weapon and uniform among the Dutch speaks eloquently of their sufferings and their defeat. It is rare to find so much warmth and variety of colour in any work of Velazquez as we find here. Its date is probably 1638.

Belonging to the last period of Velazquez are the portrait of Innocent X., already mentioned, the Infanta of our illustration, and two very famous pictures in the Prado: *The Maids of Honour* (*Las Meninas*) and *The Tapestry Weavers* (*Las Hilanderas*).

Our illustration, the Louvre *Portrait of the Infanta Margaret*, The Philip IV.'s youngest daughter, has been selected purely for its beauty. This "delicious little princess," as she has been called, appears on the canvas undisfigured by the monstrous and "appalling" hooped skirt of the period. We feel, as Louis XIV. did about her elder sister, "that it would be easy to love her". Infanta Margaret

Outside Madrid and the Royal Gallery at Vienna, there is no more representative collection of Velazquez's pictures than in the National Gallery. An example of the early period, perhaps as early as 1617 or 1618, is *The House of Martha* (No. 1375). Despite its Scriptural name, derived from the three uncouth figures in the background, this is nothing but a kitchen Pictures in the National Gallery

scene (or *Bodegone*) of the kind then in vogue with the naturalistic painters of Seville. The wrinkled face of the old woman is particularly fine.

Christ at
the Column

To the early years of the second period (1630 or 1631) belongs the *Christ at the Column* (No. 1148). To the uninitiated this picture is simply repellent. This low-type, broad, mulatto face suggests no memories of the Christ we have learned to reverence in Italian art, and both angel and child are devoid of beauty. The whole tone of the picture is grey, harsh, and cold. But the initiated value it as marking a stage in the development of the painter's talent, and exhibiting some of the most admired characteristics of his manner.

Admiral
Pulido-
Pareja

This portrait (No. 1315) of the Spanish admiral is signed and dated 1639.¹ The bluff, alert vitality of the admiral makes the portrait convincing. It is said that King Philip, some days after despatching Pareja to the Indies, entered the studio of Velazquez and, on seeing the picture, cried out indignantly: "Not yet started, Admiral".

Venus and
Cupid

This picture belongs to the last years of the painter's life, and is known as the Rokeby Venus, because it was so long in the private possession of the owner of Rokeby Park, Yorkshire. Sir Walter Armstrong, in his "Portfolio" monograph on *The Art of Velazquez*, gives a full description and criticism, from which we quote:—

"The tradition that Velazquez painted a Venus more or less in emulation of Titian, seems to be of respectable antiquity. The picture is entirely Spanish, in spite of its Venetian inspiration. The chosen model has the long oval face, the square shoulders, the muscular waist and legs, and the broad hips of the Spanish women." . . . [This is the explanation of the blurred face in the mirror:] "A fully defined head in this part of the canvas would have destroyed the pattern. It would have introduced a point of great interest, a point to which the eye would have been irresistibly attracted, exactly where it is not wanted. . . . The painter's object was to focus the attention

¹ There is a query now after the name Velazquez, the brushwork being inferior to that of his authentic pictures.

on the sweeping lines of the back and legs, and to keep his chiaroscuro as simple as possible. . . . So far as handling goes the picture is the broadest and freest ever painted by Velazquez. The figure is modelled with long sweeps of the brush, travelling with extraordinary audacity and precision over wide planes, and establishing the form in despite, as it were, of probability.”¹

We have two portraits of Philip. The full length (No. 1129) painted probably during the middle period is considered by some critics to be chiefly the work of Velazquez’s assistant and son-in-law, Mazo Martinez. We may add here that *The Boar-hunt*, *The Duel* and *The Betrothal* are also attributed to Mazo. Portraits of Philip IV.

The bust portrait (No. 745) is one of the last miracles of the brush executed by Velazquez himself. This picture, once seen, haunts the memory with a persistence that borders on obsession. The bust portrait

Velazquez painted with consummate power the things that his eyes had seen; given the objects to be seen, and there was nothing he could not do. But the gods withheld from him the gift of that higher imagination which conceives ideal beauty and creates it for our delight. He is a pedestrian on the broad highway of life, and he satisfies us best in our pedestrian moods; when, oblivious of the stars, our curiosity is engaged on the tangible things of the wayside.

A great contrast to Velazquez is his fellow-townsmen and contemporary, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo. Born in Seville in the last days of 1617 the boy at the age of nine was left a penniless orphan, and through the kindness of a relative was apprenticed to the trade of painting in the studio of one Jean del Castillo. Murillo, 1617-1682

The young Murillo learned first to paint roughly on sheets of cloth used for tapestry hangings or ornamental sails; excellent practice, as the quick work necessary gave him unusual freedom in the use of the brush.

In 1640 his master left Seville, and Murillo was thrown on

¹ *The Art of Velazquez* (p. 76).

his own resources. He painted as Velazquez did from the life, and the same Andalusian peasants; only he seems to have used them chiefly as models for sacred pictures. There was a ready sale in Seville for small cheap devotional pictures which were exported to the new colonies in America, and Murillo made a living by them. It must also have been at this time that he painted many of his Andalusian street-Arabs which afterwards became so valuable.

1641

Then came the friend who was to change the whole direction of his life, a travelled artist, Pedro de Moya, who had served in the Flemish wars, and passed under the spell of Van Dyck and Rubens. He urged Murillo to seek a wider artistic training in Flanders and Italy. For this money was lacking, but at last Murillo did reach Madrid. The great court-painter, Velazquez, showed him much kindness, and introduced him to the royal picture-galleries, where the peasant boy of Seville could study the masterpieces of Flanders and Italy. Further travel seemed unnecessary; he learned much from Velazquez, and took to heart his words: "the best teacher is Nature".

1645

In 1645 he returned to Seville, and soon became famous: he founded an academy to which young artists came in flocks to be trained, and in 1648, having married a lady of some position and fortune, he settled down to his life's work. Orders poured in on him as they did to Rubens in Antwerp, and many of the pictures now passing for genuine Murillos are certainly the work of his pupils. He was engaged on a large altar-piece for a church in Cadiz when a fall from the scaffolding resulted in irreparable injury. He returned to Seville to die.

Death,
1682

According to Spanish critics Murillo had three styles of painting: his early or "cold" manner; his second or "warm" manner; and his third or "misty" manner. He passed, in fact, through much the same stages as Velazquez, laying emphasis first on well-defined contours, then softening them by gradation of colour or shading, and at last achieving that light ethereal mode of treatment which is considered his best.

The interest of his work lies in the fact that it is essentially Spanish; there are no signs of his having accepted either the Italians or Flemings as masters; he worked independently from the life. It is also remarkable that, although Murillo was a realist as regards employing for his sacred characters some ordinary Andalusian model, he succeeded in infusing into them a certain dignity and aloofness which is full of religious mysticism. In the province of sacred art Murillo may be considered as the last of the "Old Masters".

Yet his pictures have of late years been steadily declining in popular favour. As contrasted with Velazquez, the unpromising realist, the work of Murillo shows a strain of effeminate softness which to some suggests affectation. When contrasted on the other hand with the best Italian art, he lacks that purity of colour—the symbol, we may call it, of passion—which gives to the most ideal subject virility and the simplicity of truth. Yet it cannot be denied that Murillo is a great artist. His works fall into two distinct classes: those realist studies of beggar boys which will always delight the lovers of genre subjects; and his large sacred compositions.

Among his sacred subjects one especially is characteristic, the Immaculate Conception. This belief was not authoritatively sanctioned by the Papacy until 1615. With the gradual increase of the honour paid to the Virgin came at last the thought that she too, like her Son, must have been born without sin. The severe thinkers, the Dominicans, argued that this belief was an innovation; but the Franciscans, specially fervent in the cult of the Virgin, declared that it was implicit in the already accepted dogmas of her Assumption and Coronation (p. 21). Christendom was divided, until the edict of 1615 gave a qualified sanction to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. (As a dogma we may remember that it was not enforced until 1854). In Spain, the most Catholic of Catholic countries, the rejoicings were great, and very soon we find the subject depicted. Pacheco in his treatise (p. 230) gives precise instructions as to how it should be treated. "A young maiden with grave sweet eyes, her hair golden, her features with all the

beauty painting can express, her hands to be folded on her bosom, and joined in prayer. The moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars around her head. Her robe of spotless white, her scarf or mantle of blue, cherubim and angels bearing roses, lilies and palms should hover round her. The head of the dragon to be under her feet."

Pictures by
Murillo

In this subject no painter has excelled Murillo. The example in the Louvre is well known, and one of the finest to be seen outside Spain; and there are four in the Prado which hold the highest rank. One is the unusual representation of a half figure only, with the crescent moon forming the under frame of the vignette. Two others are in the latest "misty" style, exquisite in colour, and the figure of the spotless maiden floating in a golden haze has become almost a part of heaven.

Illustra-
tions

The fourth is given in our illustration. It is less crowded with detail and therefore easier to reproduce; and the extreme simplicity of the girlish face and the folded hands lend to this picture a charm that is absent from the more gloriously ardent Madonnas which Murillo painted later. Simplicity is hard to attain; here Murillo has felt and interpreted the strength and beauty of virgin purity with the assurance of a primitive Italian. Our second illustration shows the famous altar-piece in Seville Cathedral of *S. Anthony of Padua and the Child Christ*. Here we see the masterly composition, and the dramatic intensity of presentation which marks Murillo's best work. It is only in Spain that a true estimate can be formed of his powers.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

Our two pictures of peasant boys (Nos. 74 and 1286) are good examples of Murillo's genre work. The *S. John and the Lamb*, although a little fanciful in conception, has a peculiar charm for the eye. The warm tones, and the graceful attitudes of both boy and lamb well express the perennial winsomeness of childhood, and draw us gently into a mood of reverie. The mind haunted by literary reminiscences can hardly fail to recall the lines of Blake:—



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

MURILLO

Sevilla, Madrid



S. ANTHONY AND THE CHILD JESUS

MURILLO

Madrid, Seville

"I a child and thou a lamb
We are callèd by his name." ¹

Many simple hearts have been touched by this little S. John.

The "Pedroso" *Holy Family* (No. 13) is a very fine example of Murillo's latest "misty" style. It derives its name from the Spanish family in whose possession it remained until 1810.

Francis Goya, a Spanish painter of the eighteenth century, ^{Goya,} has aroused much interest of late years. In freedom and ve- ¹⁷⁴⁶⁻¹⁸²⁸hemence of style he is allied to the modern school of impressionists. But the subjects treated by him are so extravagant and sometimes so very horrible that he holds a place apart. There is a strain, in fact, of madness running through his work, which to some of us is wholly repulsive.

We have four pictures by Goya in the National Gallery. The "Portrait of Doña Isabel Corbo de Porcel" (No. 1473) is an excellent example of his skill as a portrait-painter.

Here I should like to add a few words about a remarkable book *The Proverbs of Goya* by Mr. Blamire Young, recently published by Messrs. Jonathan Cape. It contains reproductions of the famous set of etchings by Goya known as *Los Proverbios* or *Disparates*. They have been accepted hitherto as meaningless fantasies valued only for their technical merits. Mr. Young reads into them an interpretation so lucid and so convincing that the whole problem of Goya as a man and a thinker is now re-opened.

¹ From the *Songs of Innocence*.

CHAPTER XXVII

PAINTING IN FRANCE

TO interpret French art aright is neither an easy nor an agreeable task, and we approach it with diffidence. No race prides itself more confidently on being endowed with the art-instinct, and we of the Teuton breed are heavily conscious of the truth of this claim. Their Attic rapidity of right perception has won for the French the name of the modern Greeks, yet in artistic achievement their contribution to the pictorial treasures of the world has in the past been small. In painting it is only since the great Revolution of 1789 that they seem to have reached maturity in the power of producing a truly national art.

Enthusi-
asm the
source of
Art

At the root of all great art there must be some enthusiasm so vehement that it forces the dumb to speak. The Greeks lived in a world haunted by ghostly presences, they worshipped the immortal gods, and all the fervour of their worship found expression in their art. With a decline in faith came a decline in artistic expression.

Religious
enthusiasm
in France

This enthusiasm was also known to France during the early centuries when Gothic cathedrals were rising all over the land, and nameless men of genius were at work on them with the chisel. France knew it still when the Maid Joan, in obedience to her heavenly vision, put to flight the armies of the alien. Out of such a deliverance, a new nation might have been born, and a national art as pure and delicate as that of Greece itself. But it was not so. The worthless Charles VII., for whom Louis XI., Joan gave her life, was followed in 1461 by Louis XI., the coarse-minded, cruel diplomatist who created the French monarchy.

1428

Louis XI.,
1461

We know him in *Quentin Durward*. His son Charles VIII., ¹⁴⁸³ left purposely without education, developed the war-craze which became traditional with French monarchs, and proved hostile to the growth in the nation of a true patriotism.

Then came the crucial period of the Religious Wars when ^{Religious Wars, 1562-1593} France was divided against itself. The noblest men of the nation joined the Huguenots; it seemed possible that France might follow England and Germany in their revolt from the despotism of the Church of Rome.

In 1589 the throne passed to Henry of Navarre, the Hugue- ^{Henry IV. 1589} not, and Protestant Europe was full of hope. But in 1593 for the sake of peace Henry abjured his faith; and his throne at once became secure. His astute saying, "Paris vaut bien une messe" (Paris is well worth a mass), is characteristic of the practical infidelity of France; Catholic from motives of policy, not from conviction. The Valois kings of the sixteenth century and Catherine de Médicis, their chief counsellor, were never biassed by religious considerations; Richelieu in the next century played the same game, and sent French armies to fight on the side of Protestantism in the Thirty Years' War. He also riveted on the neck of the French people more firmly than ever the yoke of an absolute monarchy. Without true religion, without political liberty, we cannot expect from such a nation as this any worthy utterance in the language of art.

The best-known pioneers in painting were the two Clouets, ^{François Clouet, 1510-1572} father and son. It is François Clouet, the son, who is the really distinguished painter of the name. He succeeded his father as court-painter to Francis I. in 1541, having first been naturalized as a Frenchman.

Flemings by race and tradition, these men were the founders of a new style of portraiture which had in it the elements of a truly French school of painting. Without sacrificing the absolute truthfulness which marks Flemish art, they exhibit that happy power of catching what is best in the faces before them which ensures grace in their presentment. We are aware of the note of "good taste" so essentially French. We have two examples in the National Gallery (Nos. 566 and 1190) attributed to

François Clouet, but as long as uncertainty prevails it is best to regard them as the work of his school.

Fréminet,
1567-1619

Under Henry IV. the painter Martin Fréminet became important. He had studied in Italy and had no sympathy with the primitive art of the Clouets. His cold and ornate imitations of the grand style of Michelangelo were vastly admired by the king, and from this time forward the "Italian manner" was taken under court patronage. A School of Painting was established at Fontainebleau where the course of training laid down was rigid enough to stifle the most independent genius.

Before noticing the affected and feeble form of art which arose, under court favour, we may pause with satisfaction on the names of Poussin and Claude Lorrain; both were truly great artists, and both cherished their own freedom of soul by a voluntary exile from France.

Nicolas
Poussin,
1594-1665

Nicolas Poussin, born in 1594 at Les Andelys in Normandy, is regarded as the head of the French School. Yet he stands alone, higher than the men of his age, and separated by the originality of his genius alike from predecessors and followers. At the age of eighteen he secretly left his home for Paris where he worked under a Flemish portrait painter, and fed his imagination on Marc Antonio's engravings of the pictures of Raphael.

At Rome,
1624

In 1624 he found his way to Rome, but instead of falling under the influence of the later Italian schools as every Frenchman before him had done, he became enamoured of the antique. Like Mantegna (p. 99) he felt that the Greeks alone understood the true language of art, and perhaps no painter of the Christian era has entered so completely as Poussin into their spirit. He became a Greek in the same manner that an old man may take delight in the simple pleasures of the child while retaining the sobriety which is born of reflection. He could not drop back as Correggio did (the "Ariel of the Renaissance") into complete irresponsibility (p. 126). Thought predominates in all Poussin's pictures, and in some he gives us pure allegory. His main excellency lies in his composition; and his figures, though sometimes wanting in ease and naturalness, have all the

grace of line which we admire in a Greek statue. His landscapes harmonize with his figures, and are carefully idealized in such a way as to give a feeling of quiet dignity to the whole picture. As a colourist Poussin is disappointing, a monotonous warm brown being the prevailing tone in all his landscapes. This is thought to be due to the dark red ground adopted by Italian painters of that period, and to the gradual fading of the superimposed pigments. But it may be also due to his own reverence for careful drawing. He once visited Venice, and fled, lest he should catch the colour fever of the Venetians.

At Rome Poussin had a hard struggle to make a living, and during a serious illness he owed his recovery to the care of ^{Marriage,} a fellow-countryman, Jacques Dughet. In 1630 he married ¹⁶³⁰ Dughet's daughter; and some years later, being childless, he adopted his wife's two young brothers. One of these, Gaspard, became famous as a landscape painter, and is sometimes known by his brother-in-law's name and called Gaspard Poussin (1613-1675). Gradually after this the fortunes of Nicolas improved; he met with a generous patron, Cardinal Barberini, and orders for pictures became numerous. Many of these were on sacred subjects, but they are always treated in the historic and classic manner.

In 1639 Poussin was invited to Paris to use his talents in ^{In Paris,} the service of his sovereign, Louis XIII. Reluctantly in 1640 ¹⁶⁴⁰⁻¹⁶⁴² he accepted the invitation, and was received with honours at the French Court. But the jealousy and hostility of the whole herd of minor painters, added to the repression exercised by court etiquette, made his stay in Paris intolerable. In 1642 he obtained release, and returned to end his days in Italy. In a letter he says: "I swear to you that if I had to live in this country I should become a regular mountebank like all the rest". In 1665, one year after the death of his much-loved wife, Pous- ^{Death at} sin died at Rome. ^{Rome, 1665}

To these later years, 1642-1665, belong all his greatest works. Knowing his isolation from the Frenchmen of his day, he lived only for his art; and as his mind matured a deeper and more suggestive symbolism is manifested in his pictures.

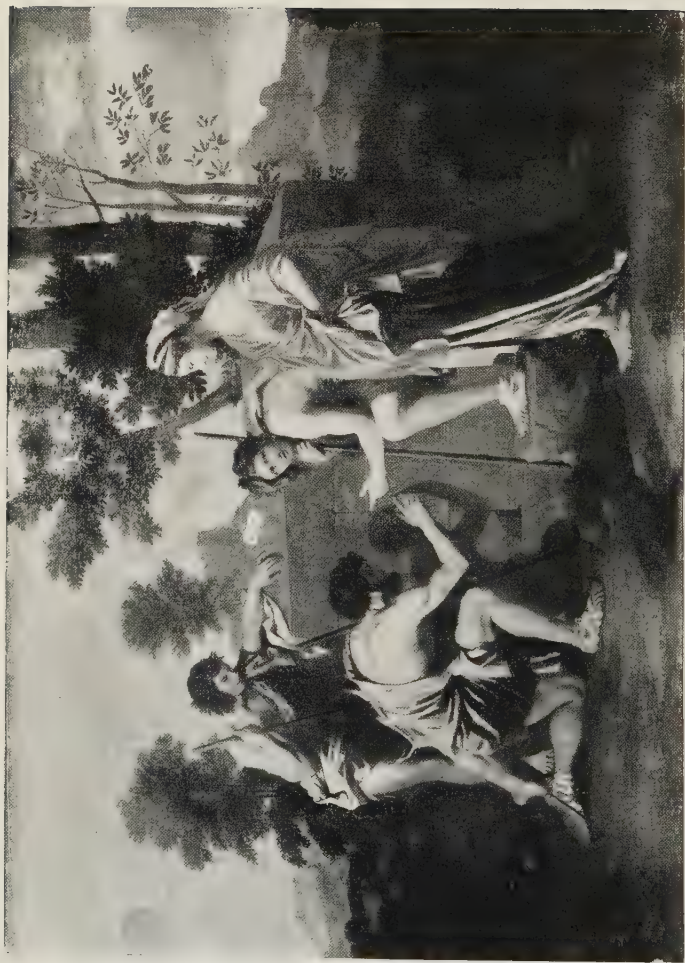
Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

Those in our Gallery belong to the earlier part of his life, and are greatly admired by connoisseurs. *The Bacchanalian Dance* (No. 62) ranks as a masterpiece. It is thought to belong to a series of four Bacchanals painted to order for Cardinal Richelieu, and if so, its latest date must be 1642, when Poussin left Paris. The composition is very effective, and the sense of rhythmic motion is contagious. But the wild satyr who has broken from the ring is horrible, and betrays the demonic forces which lurk beneath the gaiety caused by wine; the pretty innocents to the left who strain upwards to the grape-juice dropping from the hand of a bacchante are a suggestive pendant to the leering figure of Pan among the trees to the right. The colours are low in tone, and the landscape, as usual, is brown; but the picture repays study and is a characteristic example of Poussin's work. Those who wish to know him better should visit the Galleries at Dulwich and Hertford House.

Picture in
Wallace
Collection

In the latter we have a very attractive little picture, all grace and poetry, and bright, too, with an unusual amount of colour; it is called *The Dance of the Seasons* (No. 108).¹ We see them hand in hand moving in a ring. Spring, in yellow and white, faces us, and stretches out her left hand behind her to Winter,—lean and stripped. Summer is in blue and red and crowned with roses, while Autumn wears a wreath of wheat-ears. Old Time sits near with a child by him holding an hour-glass. To the left sits another child blowing bubbles, and behind him rises a terminal statue of Janus, the double-faced, who looks both back to the past and forward to the future. If we read Poussin aright it is the old face looking inwards towards the dancers which represents the "Foreknower," a face wrinkled with experience and dark with apprehension of the inevitable end. This should be contrasted with Botticelli's *Spring* (p. 67). Poussin's dancers are stiff as compared with Botticelli's fairy-light three Graces; his symbolism is more directly classic, his melancholy more profound. Botticelli paints his scene of joy with a half-belief that it may endure; Poussin knows that like an iridescent bubble it must pass

¹ This picture is now entitled, "Dance to the Music of Time".



SHEPHERDS OF ARCADIA

POUSSIN

away. "Vanity of vanities" might be his motto, "all is vanity."

This same mood of gentle pessimism pervades the beautiful picture here reproduced, *Shepherds of Arcadia*. It is one of the treasures of the Louvre. Notice the symmetrical yet perfectly natural grouping of the four figures; notice the grace and power of the tall woman who lays a hand on one of the young shepherds. The other young shepherd, with his curls and the wreath on his head, might be mistaken for the god Apollo. Youth, love, enjoyment are suggested by these three. It is the older man with a beard who kneels down to decipher the inscription on the tomb: Et in Arcadia Ego (I too have lived in Arcady). The words alone are sad as an elegy. Arcadia is a land to which no traveller returns. Poussin has chosen again the theme of the transitoriness of life and its best joys. This is an idyll of disillusion.

Shepherds
of Arcadia

Again in the Louvre is Poussin's best work, *The Four Seasons*, consisting of four separate pictures, each frankly allegorical. For Spring we have Adam and Eve in Paradise; for Summer, Ruth in the fields of Boaz; for Autumn, the mighty cluster of grapes brought by the spies from Canaan; for Winter, the Deluge. To Poussin, the thinker and the pagan, that sequence is the epic of human life.

The Four
Seasons

Contrasting sharply with the seriousness of Poussin and the severity of his figure drawing is the so-called "classic" landscape-painting of Claude Gellée, the artist of Lorraine. We know him best as "Claude" alone, or Claude Lorrain. He was born in 1600 in a village of the Vosges, but there is controversy still as to his rank in life and his early upbringing. Enough to know that he soon migrated to Rome and in 1617 was acting as assistant to the landscape painter Tassi. In Rome he met Joachim Sandrart, who proved a valuable friend, and became afterwards his biographer. From him Claude learned the importance of a direct study of Nature, and he was already recognized as a landscape painter of merit by 1630 when Poussin arrived at Rome. Claude also excelled as an etcher, and soon found patrons and employment. The style

Claude
Lorrain,
1600-1682

In Rome,
1617

of landscape which he adopted shows the reverse aspect of "classicism" to that seen by Poussin. Instead of a large steady view of life in its entirety, Claude escapes from life by a deliberate withdrawal into a world of his own. His art knows nothing either of the rougher forces of Nature, or of the stress and weary labour of the human lot. Serenity is his aim, and he achieves it. His pictures were greatly sought after, and in the quiet methodical way we should expect from this untroubled soul he kept a record of them in a book of sketches to correspond, where the date and often the destination of each finished picture is entered. This valuable *Liber Studiorum* is now in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire. We learn from Sandrart that Claude worked all day in the open air, but that he was slow and very fastidious, correcting over and over again what he had done. He could not paint figures at all or animals, and those which appear in his pictures have been inserted by some friendly artist acquaintance.

His
pictures

Yet with all this labour Claude never succeeded in painting what he saw correctly. His landscapes are conventional. A favourite device is to place one large tree or a group of trees at each side of the foreground, suggesting the curtains drawn aside to display a scene upon the stage. This dark frame heightens the effect of the sunny landscape, which opens and extends and draws us after it into a hazy distance. For Claude's talent lies in his rendering of "aerial perspective," he creates the illusion of illimitable space. He is happy too in his rendering of light, and in this forms a strong contrast to Ruysdael and Hobbema. Claude lived under the sunny skies of Italy, and he warms and gladdens us by the presence of sunlight in his pictures. He feels too the charm of water and renders it well; he delights in the undulating lines of mountains and shows them softened by distance. That he did not understand their structure, as Ruskin explains in *Modern Painters*, is a matter of small account in a "conventional" landscape. Claude obviously "composed" his landscapes, making his ideal picture in his mind, and then expressing it by the natural symbols of trees and water and hills which his eyes observed. To

say that his scenery is like stage scenery is not necessarily to disparage it. He shows us an enchanted world, where scientific criticism is out of place. If his mountains have no resemblance to Alps or Apennines they may at least suggest the range of the "Delectable Mountains" from which glimpses may be had of the Celestial City. So long as he makes his sun to shine upon them he draws us into a mood of reverie and serene content. That is enough; his art is justified.

Some of Claude's best work is in England, in private collections, or here. We have twelve examples, only four less than the number in the Louvre, and quite enough for the purpose of study. *The Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba* (No. 14) and *The Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca* (No. 12) are perhaps the most striking. In the former we see Claude's powerful and at the same time imaginative treatment of water. Such blue transparency is rare in the world of fact, but the motion and the broken lights are realistically suggested. The rising sun is boldly represented in the heavens, and the gorgeous buildings, the ships, and the figures introduced to suggest an historic occasion are all skilfully illuminated by his morning beams. It is interesting to contrast this with the Turner hanging beside it, so placed at Turner's request. We observe that the one is artificial, the other absolutely true to Nature. This is seen chiefly in the treatment of light; Claude's buildings are clean-cut as though made of cardboard, Turner's are soft at the edges but give the right effect of mass. Ruskin in *Modern Painters*—on Turner *versus* Claude—is most illuminating. He tells us that Turner saw truly how distance sharpens outlines while giving filminess to the enclosed substance; but as objects come nearer the outline seems to grow faint while the sense of mass and projection is more definite.

In No. 12 Claude's aerial perspective is wonderful, and we cannot but regret the presence of those irrelevant figures in the foreground from which the picture takes its name.

For pure loveliness No. 61 is unrivalled; a small landscape, disturbed only by two figures (perhaps representing the Annunciation), this exquisite scene has power to tranquillize even

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

Sir George
Beaumont's
Claude

an agitated soul. We learn from Wordsworth's *Peel Castle* that Sir George Beaumont, a painter himself, was acquainted with the agitating power of storms ; we can well understand his love of this calm picture which, although presented to the nation, he could not part with until his death. We have chosen it for our illustration, and couple it with the Ryks Museum Hobbema described on page 210. Even in a reproduction the difference is striking ; in the presence of the actual pictures there could be no hesitation in giving the preference to the Frenchman.

Death of
Claude,
1682

Claude died and was buried at Rome. His bones were later removed to the Church of S. Louis des Français in that city, and this inscription marks the spot : "La nation française n'oublie pas ses enfants célèbres même quand ils sont morts à l'étranger". (France does not forget her famous sons even when they die in a foreign land.)



LANDSCAPE WITH THE ANGEL

CLAUDE

National Gallery London



LANDSCAPE WITH A WATERMILL

HOBBEMA

Ryks Museum, Amsterdam, (See p. 210)

CHAPTER XXVIII

FRENCH PAINTING UNDER LOUIS XIV. AND LOUIS XV.

WHILE Poussin and Claude were at work in Rome the leading painters in France were Eustache Le Sueur and Charles Le Brun. The former (1616-1655) was a man of ^{Le Sueur,} original genius, and although engaged by the court on large de- ¹⁶¹⁶⁻¹⁶⁵⁵corative works, he threw into them a sincerity of emotion rare in French art of the time. His chief work is a series of paintings of the life of S. Bruno, founder of the Carthusian Order. Painted for a monastery, they were afterwards bought by Louis XVI. and are now in the Louvre.

The great rival of Le Sueur was Le Brun, an ambitious ^{Charles} painter who reached at last the position of supreme controller ^{Le Brun,} of the art of France. He admired Poussin, was with him for a ¹⁶¹⁹⁻¹⁶⁹⁰ time in Rome, and improved his own style by a study of both classical and Renaissance work. In 1648 he took a leading part in the foundation of the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture, an institution which gradually absorbed and directed all the artistic talent of the country. In 1643 died Louis XIII., the feeble son of the great Henry of Navarre. His young heir ^{Louis} Louis XIV. lived to become "le grand Monarque," "le Roi ^{XIV., 1643} Soleil," whose magnificence glitters over the page of history for seventy years. Among the first members of the new Academy, twelve in number, were Le Sueur and Le Brun. No young rising artist could hope for recognition who did not pass through the course of instruction provided. Le Brun aided by Colbert, the celebrated Finance Minister, also founded State-factories for tapestry, furniture, china, and all the minor decorative arts.

The familiar names of Gobelins, Sèvres and Buhl were connected with this vast system of State-control. Colbert's words are: "There is no one now in France but the king who employs sculptors, painters and other skilful workmen".

On the death of Le Sueur in 1655, the reign of Le Brun, as sole director in matters artistic, began. His own work as a painter is not particularly interesting, but as the master-mind, standing behind the throne and compelling a whole nation to follow his lead, the personality of Le Brun is very striking. All later seventeenth century French art exhibits a conscious glorification of the monarch who boasted that he in his sole person was the State ("L'Etat, c'est moi").

Eighteenth
century
painters

It is hard to distinguish clearly between the painters produced by this centralization of art, and the freer men who, in the revolt against it, brought in the true eighteenth-century style. As a rule the earlier set show the stamp of the Academy in a certain dignity and correctness of treatment: we are conscious of technical ability resulting from discipline. The eighteenth-century painters proper show an exuberance of fancy that often becomes offensive in its lawlessness.

It is convenient to classify the best known of these Frenchmen as (1) painters of portraits, (2) of decorative subjects, (3) of "*Fêtes Galantes*," (4) of *genre*.

Portrait
painters

To the first group belong Largillière (1656-1746), Rigaud (1659-1743), and Nattier (1685-1766). The first two were trained under Le Brun's system, and retained to the end their seventeenth century style. The National Gallery has recently secured a fine example of Rigaud, his *Lulli and His Fellow-musicians* (No. 2081). In the Wallace Gallery is a particularly interesting Largillière, an historical group of the family of Louis XIV. (No. 122). Nattier belongs entirely to the Louis Quinze epoch; he paints the court-ladies in the fancy dress—or undress—of mythological characters. His work is brilliant and superficial.

Decorative
painters

The most famous decorative painters were De Troy (1679-1752), Le Moine (1688-1737), and François Boucher (1704-1770). They aimed at the production of grandiose designs for the

adornment of palace walls and ceilings. The first two, aged thirty-six and twenty-seven respectively at the death of Louis XIV., had been trained in academic methods; Boucher is the typical decorator of the new age.

In 1715 Louis XIV., worn out with years and humiliated by the long disastrous war of the Spanish Succession, sank at last into the grave. His great-grandson, Louis XV., was but five years old, and for some years the Duke of Orleans acted as Regent. Soon after Louis really began to reign Madame de Pompadour became the royal favourite; and Boucher was the favourite of Madame de Pompadour. He had been a pupil of Le Moine, and after a visit to Italy felt equal to any task. He worked very rapidly, not troubling to use a model, and produced an immense number of showy renderings of mythological subjects. Nowhere, not even in the Louvre, is there a better collection of his works than at Hertford House. Nowhere at all has he a better chance of being appreciated, as the furniture of the period and the wonderful Sèvres china create for us the exact environment in which he worked.

The famous philosopher and encyclopædist, Diderot, wrote among other things an *Essay on Painting* in which he speaks harshly of Boucher. Diderot was a moralist who recognized that frivolity and licence work havoc in the hearts of men; he felt the rottenness of the court-life, the emptiness underlying its assumed gaiety; he must have had a foreboding of the approaching crash through which alone France could be regenerated. His strictures on this careless, flashy work of Boucher's were based on his own perception of the eternal seriousness of life. If we wish to be more tolerant in our judgment we must accept the butterfly mood of the artist; and, abandoning the search for ideas, we must let the eye have its pleasant feast of colour. On a foggy London day the canvases of Boucher, seen by electric light, may prove refreshing.

The painters of *Fêtes galantes* (a band apart) are the true interpreters of eighteenth-century France. That odd title *Fête Galante* or *Conversation Galante* or (ironical in the

Accession
of Louis
XV., 1715

Boucher,
1704-1770

Diderot's
Essay on
Painting

Painters of
Fêtes
galantes

extreme) *Fête Champêtre* seems to have come in with the new century. It is hard to translate: perhaps the slang term "smart" is the best equivalent for the adjective "galant". After the death of the Great Monarch, in whose presence every natural instinct was hidden under a masque of etiquette, there was a relapse to naturalism; but a naturalism that still wore a conventional disguise. The "smart" ladies and gentlemen in these pictures are honestly engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, but, like all well-bred persons, they observe the rules of the game. Recognizing how the freshness of open air gives added charm to a social gathering, they seek the country, but carry their town conventions with them. So we have "Rustic" Festivals too, where ladies in low-necked gowns are seen lounging under the forest trees, while elegant gentlemen hover round them in obsequious devotion. As a painter of *Fêtes Galantes* Watteau stands supreme; Pater (1690-1743) was his pupil; Lancret (1696-1736) strove in vain to out-rival him.

Watteau,
1684-1721

Antoine Watteau was born in 1684 at Valenciennes; but a restlessness, born partly of disease, partly of artistic talent, soon drove him to Paris. He had in him the seeds of consumption, and there is something of its hectic flush in his work. He moved from master to master, beginning in the humblest manner with merely decorative panels. He became intimate with a touring band of Italian comedians, and evidently was attracted by the scenic effects of the stage. He became at last the assistant of M. Audran, a fashionable artist, and Keeper of the Luxembourg. The brilliant assemblies of court gallants and ladies seen by him in those famous gardens were imprinted on his memory. He had also the opportunity of studying the masterpieces of Italian Renaissance art in the Royal Galleries, and Rubens, Titian, and Veronese taught him to love the glories of colour. In 1709 Watteau became a pupil of the Academy, but did not at first meet with success. By 1717 his peculiar gift for the painting of *Fêtes Galantes* was so fully recognized that he was urged to apply for admission as a member. As a special favour he was allowed to choose his own subject for the diploma picture, and *Le Départ pour Cythère* was

His
diploma
picture



LE DÉPART POUR CYTHERE

WATTEAU

(Musée de la Ville de Paris)

sent in and enthusiastically accepted. We reproduce it as our illustration. This is considered Watteau's masterpiece. The theme was new, a modernized Greek romance. On the Island of Cythera was one of the most famous shrines of Venus, and Watteau represents ladies and gentlemen—in court costumes—setting forth on the ancient quest. The colour, the sense of motion, the shining water and the sky all combine to strike the note of careless irresponsible gaiety so characteristic of the art of Watteau. Yet the feeling of transitoriness is also subtly introduced, and we are conscious of an undertone of sadness. Watteau was the inventor of this kind of picture, for this is essentially a *Fête Galante*, although larger and more ambitious than those by which he is best known. As a rule his pictures are small, and he gives us often groups of only four or five figures. In nearly all we have this piquant incongruity of fashionable persons taking their pleasure in the woods. In every genuine work from his hand we have a free, fluid application of paint that gives lightness and brilliancy of effect; his love of white and of the purer shades of red and blue is very marked.

We have no example of Watteau in the National Gallery, but Hertford House can boast of nine, all of them works of extraordinary merit. *Les Amusements Champêtres* and *Le Rendez-Vous de Chasse* (Nos. 391 and 416) have the further interest of being large pictures, which show Watteau's power in the treatment of landscape, and belong to the maturest period of his art. He died, as we know, young, with the possibilities in him of further excellence.

Gilles and His Family (No. 381) has an extraordinary fascination; notice how the cool pure white of his costume seems to blend with the rich tints on either side rather than to extinguish them by its brilliancy. In the face of Gilles, the professional merry-maker, there is a world of weariness, not to be banished by the music of his guitar. The wife looks worn with anxiety, and, though the boys are gay enough, the young daughter seems already acquainted with care.

This may be regarded as a piece of genre work in its faith-

fulness to fact, but the scheme of colour changes it to a poem.

Much admired by some critics is *The Fountain* (No. 395). Again the pure white robe of the lady seems to "make a sunshine in the shady place". The red costume of her partner forms a rich contrast; and as they stand by the edge of the pool which surrounds the bronze fountain, we see faint reflections in the water. Three figures sit half hidden to the left, one with his hand on a guitar. This is an ideal *Conversation Galante*.

There is no lack in the Wallace Collection of pictures by Pater and Lancret, from the study of which we may learn how rightly to estimate the superiority of Watteau.

Genre
pictures

During this century of affectation (as seen in Boucher) and of pathetic hunger for enjoyment (as illustrated by Watteau) one quiet, patient man of genius was assiduously at work, painting the simple things which he loved.

Chardin,
1699-1779

Jean-Baptiste Chardin was a native of Paris, born there in 1699 and dying there in 1779. His parents were in a humble station, but gave him the chance of learning his art from a good master. His style is, however, quite original. At first he confined himself to very unpretentious subjects, painting the loaf, or the kettle, or the flower, or piece of fruit which caught his eye and stirred the desire of imitation. A close observer, he acquired such skill in the painting of still life as to attract the notice of the fashionable painters of the day, and in 1725 he was admitted to the Academy. After this he devoted himself increasingly to true genre subjects. He had great simplicity of vision and observed with keen sympathy the homeliest details of life. His skill as a craftsman is astonishing; he has an eye for colour and a perfect understanding of chiaroscuro. One day a fellow-artist was boasting of a secret method he had discovered of purifying his colours. "And who tells you that one should paint with colours?" asked Chardin. "With what then, Monsieur?" asked the other. "One makes use of colours, but one paints with feeling," was Chardin's reply. ("On se sert de couleurs—on peint avec le sentiment".)

Diderot, so severe on Boucher, regarded Chardin "as the finest colourist of France, perhaps of the world". Another (Descamps) asked in despairing wonder: "Those whites of Chardin, where does he get those whites?"

In our Gallery we have two good specimens of this master's work. In No. 1258 we have a *Study of Still Life*:—bread, a bottle and tumbler of wine, and a knife are lying on a piece of crumpled newspaper. One might see this any day in a French cottage; the careless pose of these few human chattels makes them half alive, and we expect the immediate return of the peasant owner.

In *La Fontaine* (No. 1664) we are at once captivated by the white jacket and the white head-dress, and can understand Descamps' enthusiasm. How beautiful, too, is the scheme of colour; the blue apron, the red meat hanging from the roof, the marvellous russet sheen of the copper can or "fontaine," from which the girl is drawing water. Her attitude is full of simple grace. Looked at hastily this picture might be almost mistaken for Dutch work; but it is not a literal transcript from nature, it is endowed with a singular charm which tells of sympathy and imagination on the part of the painter. Chardin painted his first *Fontaine*, in 1733, on wood, and it became the property of a Swede. It is now in Stockholm, but is unfortunately much cracked through careless exposure in too hot a room. In later years Chardin made at least four repetitions on canvas of this favourite subject, but it is not easy to trace the history of this particular copy. The largest and best collection of his works is in the Louvre, and our illustration, *La Mère Laborieuse*, was exhibited in 1748 in the Salon of that time, and was bought by the French king.¹

More appreciated by his contemporaries than Chardin was Jean Baptiste Greuze, who is also a so-called *genre* painter. As a kind of protest against the frivolous and sometimes licentious pictures of the court-artists, Greuze depicted scenes of middle-class family life. *The Village Bride*, *The Paternal Curse*, *The Milkmaid* (all in the Louvre) were amongst his earliest and favourite works. Diderot welcomed the painter

¹ Two interesting examples (Nos. 4077 and 4078) have been added to N.G.

of simple family life as a friend to virtue; he thought this combination of art with morality might regenerate decaying France. But Greuze had not the courage to be quite true, and his wish to produce a pretty picture resulted in insincerity and sentimentalism; his "innocent" young girls being often more sensual than the nude goddesses of Boucher. He achieved an extraordinary popularity. But when the French Academy in 1769 received him, and classified him as a "*genre*" painter, he was wild with vexation. He had sent in an historic subject which was not accepted, although his talent for lighter work was fully recognized.

His heads of girls vary in interest; when they are simple they are very pleasing. The *Girl with an Apple* (No. 1020) in the National Gallery is a good example. At Hertford House Greuze may be studied to satiety; it contains twenty-one examples of what Lady Dilke calls his "sensual sentimentalism".

Our illustration shows him at his best. This deservedly popular *Broken Pitcher* is in the Louvre (No. 372).

The
Barbizon
School

During the nineteenth century the story of French art is one of continuous progress. Although Ingres (1780-1867) and his disciples tried to revive the classic style, Delacroix (1798-1863) broke away from it, and is regarded as the founder of the Romantic School. Then came the influence of Constable and Bonington (see p. 278), and the faithful open-air study of Nature which marks the painters of the Barbizon School.

Corot,
1796-1875

In Jean Baptiste Corot we have the individualistic interpretation of Nature: he sees his own vision and reiterates with convincing insistence the note of tenderness and mystery which seems to be Earth's message to himself. Evening light, sombre feathery trees, a sense of hush pervading the scene; all these dreamlike solemnities we shall find and love in the pictures of Corot.

Millet,
1814-1875

Jean François Millet gives us the larger vision of Man as a part of Nature. He shows us the peasant toilers who have grown as it were into the soil. They are permanent as the landscape itself. His wood-cutters are apparent sharers in the



LA CRUCHE CASSÉE

GREUZE
Peint, Paris



LA MÈRE LABORIEUSE

CHARDIN
Peint, Paris

century-old stubborn life of the forest trees ; his gleaners must have stooped with the same primeval grace since the days of Ruth. On seeing his *Angelus* we are tempted to ask whether its first ringing was coeval with the curfew, although persuaded that a thousand years earlier must be the true date. He presents the inexplicable paradox—of man, bending beneath the weariness of labour, yet exalted by it to true dignity. In such work as this French art announced the promise of a great future. Following Chardin and Corot, though not actually deriving from either, we have the remarkable movement known as Impressionism, of which further mention is given in Appendix A. But we may note here that a bold lead in the direction of what may be called democratic interest in human life had been given by Millet. And Corot, the dreamer, the wide-wanderer over the fields and forests of France, had set the tune for a new attitude of approach to Nature. Neither as a frame to human figures, nor as a romantic haunt of fairies was nature to be regarded ; but there was to be a full acceptance of the attitude expressed (perhaps first) by Dürer (p. 186), who “ painted landscape for its own sake, having felt the poetry of the visible world about him.”

CHAPTER XXIX

THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF PAINTING

THE wise man's saying, "Know thyself," has rung in our ears for some considerable time; yet the task of obeying it remains baffling as ever. In judging of English art it may be helpful to seek guidance of a foreigner.

Dr.
Waagen's
criticism

Dr. Waagen, a solid German thinker and art-critic, has analysed the subject well. He visited every gallery in this country, public and private, before bringing out in 1854 his *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*. He recognizes that we too "have lived in Arcadia," and known the craving for artistic utterance. There are signs of an early native school both in painting and sculpture. In the former the chief advance was made in the painting of miniatures, itself an off-shoot from the decorative work of illumination so much practised by the monks. In the fifteenth century came our period of social disturbance, and the Wars of the Roses seem to have extinguished art. Its revival was based on a conscious imitation of the superior, but allied art of Flanders. So argues Dr. Waagen. He continues: "But when once an original and indigenous mode of art is supplanted by a foreign style of superior development, it becomes doubly difficult to revive it, and in this case the difficulty was increased by the number of excellent Netherlandish artists who continued to flourish in England under English patronage". We remember Holbein and Sir Anthony Mor, in the days of the Tudors. In the next century it was Rubens the Fleming who was invited here by Charles I., and it was Van Dyck and his assistants who painted the portraits of

Wars of
the Roses,
1455-1485

the English cavaliers. Later followed Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680), Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723), and numerous others. There was scanty patronage for Englishmen, and without some degree of patronage and the technical aids required in painting, it seemed impossible for a native school to arise. Dr. Waagen, however, suggests that we English had another vent for national emotion in the kindred art of poetry. "In Shakespere . . . the national genius for art found its golden age. He was to the English what the *cinque-cento* age was to the Italians." During the seventeenth century the opposing forces of Puritanism and Restoration-frivolity were equally hostile to sincere artistic work. Not until the ponderous Hanoverians were immovably settled by Walpole's policy on the English throne, did our commercial prosperity expand, and with it the power to patronize and encourage English artists. Hence we are accustomed to look on Hogarth as the founder of the English School.

Though born in London Hogarth belonged to a family of Westmoreland farmers, and showed early signs of talent. In 1724 he entered Sir James Thornhill's Art-school and made rapid progress. But a run-away match in 1729 with the daughter of Sir James threw Hogarth on his own resources, and we soon hear of him as a painter. He was singularly independent in his views, and, refusing to conform to any of the art-canons then in vogue, he chose to paint the things he saw in his own way.

Hogarth saw the "seamy side" of life in various classes of society, and he painted what he saw without mercy and without any trace of the selective taste which generally accompanies the art-instinct. His work should be contrasted with that of the typical Frenchman, Watteau. In Hogarth we see two marked English characteristics: the love of the drama, and the Puritan love of enforcing a moral. His first striking success was a series of six dramatic pictures called *The Harlot's Progress* (1731). He shows us an unfortunate girl whose love of pleasure leads her into sin; then stage by stage she is shown sinking lower into degradation, and the series ends with a horrible picture of her death. Only one of the six originals now exists,

George I.
1714-1727

William
Hogarth,
1697-1764

The
Progresses
1734

but all were quickly engraved and the series became immensely popular and made Hogarth famous. *The Rake's Progress*, in eight scenes, followed in 1734, and the originals of this may be seen in the Soane Museum.

Head of
Art School,
1734

Hogarth, the successful artist, was soon reconciled to his father-in-law, Sir James Thornhill, and in this same year of 1734 succeeded him as head of the Art-school in Covent Garden. Here Hogarth introduced many valuable reforms, especially the practice of studying from the living model.

Le
Mariage
à la Mode,
1745

In 1745 he completed his masterpiece, *Le Mariage à la Mode*, in which the dramatic narrative of a wretchedly unhappy marriage is told in six scenes. These pictorial "sermonettes" are easily accessible in the National Gallery, where Hogarth's works are collected in one room.¹ All his pictures abound in technical merits which appeal to the expert, and Hogarth is enjoying a greater reputation than he had in his lifetime.

Sir Joshua
Reynolds,
1723-1792

Sir Joshua Reynolds both as man and painter belongs to another genus. He came of an intellectual stock. His father (a former fellow of Balliol) was headmaster of the Grammar School at Plympton Earl in Devonshire. Here his third son, the painter, was born in 1723. At seven he drew a careful and correct little perspective sketch. The father's comment (betraying some asperity) remains on it and proves its date: "This is drawn by Joshua in school out of pure idleness". But the boy's talent defied opposition; at twelve he was painting his first portrait in oils, and his father at last decided to apprentice him to Thomas Hudson, a London painter. His apprenticeship lasted only two years, and he then settled as a portrait-painter at Devonport.

Appren-
ticed to
Hudson,
1640

With
Keppel to
Italy, 1749

Reynolds had all his life been intimate with the family of Lord Edgcumbe, and in 1749 he met their friend Augustus Keppel, a young naval officer. This acquaintance, which ripened into a life-long friendship, opened at once in adventure. Commodore Keppel carried off the young artist on board his ship the *Centurion* and so gave him a free passage to Italy. For three years Reynolds lingered and studied, chiefly in Rome. It was there in the draughty halls of the Vatican that he con-

¹ These pictures are now in the Tate Gallery.

tracted the deafness in one ear which troubled him for the rest of life. And earlier in his tour he met with an accident which mutilated his upper lip. A chalk sketch of himself at nineteen (one of the treasures of Manchester) shows a handsome youth, not to be recognized in the later portraits. He returned in 1752 to Devonport with matured artistic convictions, and a modesty of aim that is surprising in one so gifted. It was Lord Edgcumbe who persuaded him to go to London.

Reynolds settled in the neighbourhood of S. Martin's Lane, and soon had the fashionable world thronging to his studio. It was Keppel who had transported him to Italy, and it was Keppel who lifted him into fame. Reynolds painted a portrait of his friend, showing him at a moment of crisis when his ship, too eager in pursuit of the enemy, had run ashore on the French coast. Keppel appears on the beach, with rocks and stormy clouds behind, and the waves breaking at his feet. He seems to be literally walking out of the picture. One hand is raised to give directions to his men, the other grasps his sword.

This was something new in portraiture. As Sir Walter Armstrong expresses it: "He paints the energies and aptitudes of the man as well as his head and body". This striking picture is now the property of Lord Rosebery. At the time it led to such an influx of commissions that Reynolds was obliged to employ assistants for the draperies and backgrounds of most of his pictures.

In 1754 he met Dr. Johnson, and ten years later became a member of the Literary Club. Among that circle he formed close relations of friendship with Edmund Burke, Garrick the actor, and above all with the warm-hearted Irishman, Oliver Goldsmith, familiarly known as "Goldie".

Already in 1760 Reynolds had bought a large house in Leicester Fields, and added to it a gallery for his collection of Old Masters, and a studio especially designed for his work. In this house he executed his most famous pictures, and when the day's work was over, found his pleasure in gathering his friends about him and entertaining them at his table with informal hospitality.

Founding
of Royal
Academy,
1768

In 1768 the Royal Academy of Art was founded and Reynolds became its first President. A training school for students was established, and the annual exhibitions of painting and sculpture with which London is still familiar. King George, though not himself a lover of Reynolds' pictures, was conscious of his pre-eminence and knighted him.

Death of
Dr. John-
son, 1784

In 1784 Reynolds was called to the death-bed of his valued friend Dr. Johnson. Those who know their *Boswell* as they should will remember the unaffected pathos of that farewell scene. Sir Joshua, now past sixty, worked on steadfastly and with growing powers to the end.

Blindness,
1789

In 1789 he laid down his brush. A sudden darkness veiled the eyes which had year by year gained in penetration and truth of vision. The "invulnerable man," as Dr. Johnson used to call him, bore his affliction with dignity and reticence.

Last
Academy
Dinner,
1790

In December, 1790, in his last Discourse to the Academy students, he spoke of the great master whose genius he well-nigh worshipped. "I would tread in the steps of that great master," were some of his words: ". . . I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of—Michael Angelo".

Death,
1792

He had his wish. On February 23rd, 1792, Sir Joshua Reynolds died; "invulnerable" to the last. Burke writes of him: "Nothing can equal the tranquillity with which he views his end".

There has been an attempt of late, by no less an authority than Sir Walter Armstrong, to discredit the testimony of those who in his life-time knew Reynolds and loved him. We may fortify our faith by recalling a few well-known facts.

Character
of Reynolds

After Sir Joshua's recovery from a severe illness Johnson writes: "If I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man I can call a friend". Burke, writing of himself and Keppel, calls Sir Joshua "a common friend of us both," and continues, "with whom we lived for many years without a moment of coldness, of peevishness, of jealousy, or of jar, to the day of our final separation".

We should recall Goldsmith's *Retaliation*, in which he

facetiously wrote epitaphs in advance on the members of the Literary Club :—

“ Here Reynolds is laid, and to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind ; ”

and the rest of the passage.

On hearing of “ Goldie’s ” death we know that Sir Joshua sat silent and idle throughout a whole day. No hint here of an unfeeling heart. Prettiest tale of all is that of little six-year-old Penelope Boothby, who had often gone with her nurse to his studio. One day, through bewildering London streets, the child ran off there alone. Anxiously pursued she was found nestling in the great chair so often occupied by Sir Joshua’s famous sitters. In Penelope’s baby-language he was her “ own ownest friend ”. We may trust the intuitions of children as resting on a surer basis than the theories of an art-critic.

We can name but a few of his famous pictures. Among his earliest are a portrait of himself in the National Portrait Gallery, and the Keppel portrait already mentioned. The works of this early period (1752-1760) are well preserved, but, in his eagerness to improve, Reynolds made experiments with pigments and varnishings which proved disastrous. In some cases the colours have faded, in others the surface is marred by cracks. But the vigour of his style and the happy arrangement of the subject reveal, even in decay, a master mind.

To his middle period (1760-1775) belong the fascinating *Nellie O'Brien* (by some considered his best work), and the *Strawberry Girl*, both in the Wallace Collection. For the latter Reynolds himself had a special affection.

To his latest period (1775-1789) belong both the pictures chosen as illustrations. The beautiful *Ladies Laura, Horatia, and Maria Waldegrave* were great-nieces of Horace Walpole, and it was he who commissioned Reynolds to paint them. The old gentleman had a fancy to see them represented as the three Graces, a wish fortunately thwarted. He also made objections to the artist’s fee, £300, little imagining that when the picture changed hands it would fetch £20,000.

The charm of this great work lies in its extreme simplicity and truth to nature. It also has the quality—so difficult to achieve—of unity. There is nothing artificial in the group before us, the girls are living their natural life, they may have sat like this many a day at the work-table before Sir Joshua fixed the beautiful vision on his canvas. The skein of silk which is being wound and the embroidery frame show the “energies and aptitudes” of these lovely feminine creatures just as surely as the quick gait and uplifted hand show the man of action in the portrait of Keppel. Instead of a background of storm we have here a calm distant view which harmonizes with the gentle occupation of the girls. This picture was painted in 1781 and is now the property of Mrs. Thwaites.

Duchess of
Devonshire
and Child

The portrait (painted in 1784) of Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire and her child is a universal favourite. Here Sir Joshua deals with the mystery of motherhood, the subject so dear to mediæval art; and so frequently and so sympathetically treated by himself. Here he has seized the vein of merriment which transports mother and child together into the same region of exquisite folly. They are playing a game, in which imaginary birds are sent fluttering off into the air, and the child is shouting with gaiety as she opens out her fingers to let them fly. The colouring of this picture is brilliant; the fair face of the duchess, framed in powdered hair, stands out in relief against a crimson curtain. It is an heirloom in the Devonshire family, and is now at Chatsworth.¹

Mrs. Siddons

In this same year Reynolds painted his magnificent *Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse*, of which there is a good replica at Dulwich, the original belonging to the Duke of Westminster.

Pictures
in the
National
Gallery

Gainsborough, on seeing Sir Joshua's contributions to an eighteenth century Academy Exhibition, exclaimed fiercely: “Damn the fellow, he is so various”. With admiration instead of envy we may verify this statement for ourselves in the National Gallery. One of the most valuable pictures is No. 887, the original *Portrait of Dr. Johnson*, painted in 1772 for Mrs. Thrale; another, No. 111, the *Portrait of Lord Heathfield*

¹ See p. 273.



THE LADIES WALDEGRAVE

REYNOLDS

Mrs. Thwaites, London

painted in 1787. In both we see the same power of representing the entire man. Instructed by Boswell we recognize at once that this Dr. Johnson is no impostor; we see the man in his habit as he lived. Lord Heathfield with the key of Gibraltar in his hand is an epitome of England's imperial policy. *Lady Cockburn and her children* (No. 2077) is a perfect idyll of domestic happiness and has preserved the brilliance of its original colouring. This is the picture which on its first hanging-day was greeted by the artists present with a spontaneous clapping of hands. We have three delightful pictures of children:—*The Infant Samuel*, *The Age of Innocence* (one of his latest works painted in 1788), and the very popular *Heads of Angels*, painted in 1787.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, according to his own confession, distrusted genius; he believed in the stimulating example of fine models combined with the exact knowledge which can be obtained only by observation and industry. His work shows that he possessed more genius than he knew; his powerful and cultivated mind led him consciously to the discovery of a sympathetic mode of artistic expression. He may have less fire, as some assert, than Gainsborough, but his command of an impressive style proclaims him the more accomplished artist.

Of Gainsborough, the contemporary of Reynolds, our notice must, although reluctantly, be short. As a painter he ranks higher than Sir Joshua, his handling of the brush being original and most effective. In intellectual gifts he was less well endowed, but by the light of genius he saw with miraculous clearness into the heart of his subject. We may speak of his best work as executed in the heat of inspiration, and into this condition he seemed able to enter at will.

Thomas Gainsborough, born in 1727, was a native of Suffolk. His father, a respectable clothier in Sudbury, was alarmed by the boy's erratic love of truancy in the woods. But on seeing the impromptu portrait of a well-known tramp he became reconciled to the position of being the father of a genius. The boy was sent to London to be trained, but in acquiring the technical school methods of the time his progress was slow. He

Thomas
Gains-
borough,
1727-1788

returned soon to his beloved Suffolk, married, and settled at Ipswich as a humble painter of portraits. He loved landscape-painting better, but could not sell his pictures ; and it was his wife's private income which kept the home going in these early years.

Philip
Thicknesse

As with Reynolds, it was the intervention of a stranger which paved the way to success. No gallant young officer this time on a ship bound for Italy, but a cross-grained officious person who "discovered" and then proceeded to patronize the obscure painter. Yet this Philip Thicknesse proved a valuable friend.

At Bath,
1760

It was he who persuaded Gainsborough to try his fortunes in Bath, and in 1759-1760 he took a large house there and soon won the favour of the fashionable world. Thicknesse too settled in Bath and used his influence successfully in capturing sitters for his friend. But Gainsborough gained something more than notice and handsome fees by his change of residence ; he had the opportunity of seeing fine pictures in many of the country houses where he now found a welcome. We trace Italian influence in his growing love of colour ; and Van Dyck, the master he idolized, seems to have revealed to him the unawakened powers within himself.

In London,
1774

A quarrel with Thicknesse led in 1774 to the removal of Gainsborough and his family to London, where he rented part of Schomberg House in Pall Mall. He was already a member of the Royal Academy, and, being a Tory in politics, he soon won the favour of King George. Many portraits of royal persons were painted by him and exhibited, and one of these was the cause of Gainsborough's memorable secession. He asked for a place on the line ; and "presenting his compliments to the gentlemen appointed to hang the pictures at the Royal Academy he begs leave to hint that if the Royal Family . . . are hung above the line . . . he never more, whilst he breathes, will send another picture to the Exhibition. This he swears by God."

Owing to a misunderstanding the desired position was not granted and Gainsborough kept his vow. He was a man of



THE MORNING WALK

GAINSBOROUGH

Lord Rothschild

irritable temper, quick to take offence, and an adept in the use of extremely ugly language. Yet there was a kindliness of heart beneath the rough exterior which secured him friends, and his last letter to Sir Joshua proves him capable of generous admiration for the man whom he regarded as responsible for the Academy's rebuff.

It was in July, 1788, that Reynolds obeyed the call to his Death, death-bed, and "went over to look at his things". In his next ¹⁷⁸⁸ discourse Sir Joshua spoke of them with warm appreciation and added: "if any little jealousies had subsisted between us, they were forgotten in those moments of sincerity". We remember too Gainsborough's dying words: "We are all going to heaven, and Van Dyck is of the company".

The three periods in his life mark the three periods of His Gainsborough's development. During the Suffolk period his pictures work is not only tentative, but to a certain degree cramped. But nearly every work painted during the Bath period (1760-1774), or the London period (1774-1788), may be regarded as a masterpiece. Our illustration, *The Morning Walk*, shows the hand of the mature artist. Squire Hallett and his new-made wife, fresh as the morning themselves, are out walking with their dog. But the artist gives us more than two unaffected and vivid portraits; he catches a true picture. The group is one and indivisible; the air of proprietorship in the husband matches well with the silent trust shown in the attitude of the wife. The Pomeranian dog too is indispensable; he plainly owns them both. The colours in this picture are so subdued that it is only close study which reveals the care with which they have been combined; the touch is so free that we recall Velazquez and feel that the whole picture has been "willed" on to the canvas. But unlike Velazquez, Gainsborough had an eye for beauty, and he seldom fails to gratify our desire for it. Lord Rothschild is the happy owner of *The Morning Walk*.

Better known and more frequently discussed is the Duke of The Blue Westminster's *Blue Boy*, a clever portrait of Master Buttall, ^{Boy} in which Gainsborough has defied the conventions with regard

to a colour scheme. Instead of throwing his cooler tints, blue and grey, into the background, and bringing forward the reds and yellows, he has reversed this arrangement and given central prominence to the boy's blue suit. The result is a very successful *tour de force*, which is also a charming picture.¹

The National Gallery is very rich in characteristic works, the portrait of *Mrs. Siddons* (No. 683) being one of the most striking. Before that brilliant group, *The Baillie Family*, we may well ask with Swinburne: "What grace shall be said" before this feast of beauty? We may learn in this Gallery how Gainsborough was himself almost as "various" as the rival whose versatility he envied. And, if anxious to see two pictures in which Gainsborough may be said to excel himself, we have only to visit the Wallace Collection and make acquaintance with *Mrs. Robinson* (Perdita), the once popular actress; and, standing close beside her, the irresistible little *Miss Haverfield* in her overwhelming hat. We shall then understand the eulogies of every competent critic, and know no rest until we have read Sir Walter Armstrong's masterly work on this greatest of English portrait painters. And we shall enjoy the music of Ruskin's praise: "Gainsborough's hand is as light as the sweep of a cloud, as swift as the flash of a sunbeam . . . Gainsborough's masses are as broad as the dividing in heaven of light from darkness . . . Gainsborough's forms are grand, simple and ideal . . . Gainsborough never loses sight of his picture as a whole . . . He is an immortal painter, and his excellence is based on principles of art long acknowledged and facts of Nature universally apparent."²

Less great than Gainsborough, but hauntingly attractive, is George Romney. Like a minor poet his range is narrow, but within it he achieves exquisite work. Fortune was kind when she led his steps to Schomberg House where the lovely Emma Lyon was being exploited by a quack doctor, and acting the part of the "Goddess of Health". She became Romney's model, and inspired his best work. We know the story of the neglected wife at Kendal; but it was to seek fame that

¹ This picture is now in the possession of Mr. Huntingdon of New York.

² *Modern Painters* (1888 edition, p. xix, note).





GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE, AND CHILD
 REYNOLDS *Chatsworth. (See p. 208)*



LADY HAMILTON AS 'NATURE'

Romney had left her, and there is no hint of any dishonourable tie between him and Emma. When she became Lady Hamilton she was grateful to her old friend, and by sitting to him again, renewed the early freshness of his powers. She revealed to him the beauty of perfect womanhood, and in every girl's face he looked on and painted, he seemed to discover some traces of affinity with his "divine lady". Our illustration shows her demurely personating Romney's conception of *Nature*. His portraits of women, especially young women, never fail to suggest the pathos of a beauty which is delicate and fleeting like the bloom of a flower. His portraits of young men are also good, and in a subtle manner seem to exhale the irrepressible hopes and energies of youth.¹

Two other well-known portrait painters of the eighteenth century are John Hoppner and Sir Thomas Lawrence. The former formed his style on that of Reynolds, and produced work of a high degree of excellence. His pictures are greatly in request at the present day.

Thomas Lawrence, the son of a Bristol publican, was a self-taught and precocious genius, who at last found his way to London and became quickly popular. He refused, however, to go through the necessary discipline of eye and hand, so that his work is showy, but rarely truthful. One of his soundest pieces of work is the portrait of George IV. in the Wallace Collection.

Henry Raeburn represents Scotland in our fine collection of British Artists. Born in Edinburgh in 1756 he showed artistic talent at an early age, and by his marriage at twenty-two with a lady of means he was enabled to travel and cultivate his natural gifts. He excels in portraits, and although many of the best of these are in the National Gallery of Scotland, we have some fine examples in our own Gallery. The *Portrait of Mrs. Lauzun* (No. 1837) is particularly striking.

A very interesting example of his work, *Lady Dalrymple* has been recently left to the nation by Mr. Salting, and is now in the Tate Gallery.

¹ The *Beaumont Family* (No. 3400) was added in 1919.

CHAPTER XXX

ENGLISH LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

IN the art of landscape painting England holds a leading position. Although in order of time our famous artists come later than those of Holland, they were quite independent, and founded a distinctly national school of painting. They were the pioneers of that intimate and personal relation between man and Nature which alone can give power to interpret her secrets. It is curious to notice how this love of Nature, a new blossom in the heart of man, begins shyly to lift its head during the age of rationalism, the so-called "prosaic" eighteenth century. The parallelism of dates between poets and painters is striking: Thomson, author of the "Seasons," was born in 1700, and Wilson, our first important landscape painter, only fourteen years later. Collins, with the true sylvan note in his song, is almost exactly contemporary with Gainsborough. Blake, born in 1757, shines as a double star in the firmament of the second half of the century. Poems that might have been lisped in Eden (had the blessed trouble of children been allowed to intrude) and pictures which shake us by their awful mystery and splendour,—these flash forth from the one name. Then towards the end Wordsworth and Coleridge, the creators of a new literature, have hardly alighted on the earth ("trailing their clouds of glory") before Turner and Constable follow. The "Nature-poets" and the "Nature-painters" were equally the spokesmen of their age, and expressed in artistic form its new delight in the life of the visible world.

To speak first of Wilson (1714-1782): he interests us by his

courageous persistence in painting natural scenes, although meeting with scant appreciation. The son of a Welsh clergyman, he had been trained as a portrait-painter, but after a visit to Italy devoted himself wholly to landscapes. He was influenced by Claude and never failed to compose a pretty picture. He might have reached greater independence of style had he been understood and encouraged. Sir George Beaumont, the friend of Wordsworth, was Wilson's best patron, and it is to him that the National Gallery is indebted for two of its finest specimens of Wilson's art, *The Ruins of the Villa of Maecenas at Tivoli*, and a *Landscape with Figures* (Nos. 108 and 110). We have besides nine other characteristic pictures.

Gainsborough dealt with landscape in a different manner. There is no sign of a search for picturesque "bits"; his love for Nature was too whole-hearted. Nor is there any hint of the classical affectation which Wilson borrowed from Claude. The boy who had played truant on the Suffolk wolds saw beauty everywhere; he was born, he said, to be a landscape painter, and often grew impatient over the portraits by which he earned his bread. Gainsborough's sureness of vision gave unity to every scene he looked on. His peasants, his animals, his rustic carts are like natural growths emanating from the soil; they have the fitness of inevitable things, just as in life the spell they lay upon us is almost as strong as that of the landscape itself. A hay-cart on a summer evening, piled with its grey-green load; the patient horses; the rhythmic swing of the forks as they raise the pile higher and higher;—which of us has not seen all this? If a sudden sleep, as in the fairy-tale, were to fall on the whole group we should hardly think it strange. The pause would grant us our wish that the fugitive moment might be prolonged. It is this kind of magic pause which Gainsborough grants to us in his pictures. Of their execution it is for the expert to speak. We remember Ruskin's words, that "his hand is as light as the sweep of a cloud, as swift as the flash of a sunbeam" (see p. 272). Our wish—a disappointed wish—was to procure for reproduction a Gains-^{Gainsborough, 1727-1788}

borough which is in private hands. None from the National Gallery is satisfying when reproduced. But the reader should study *The Market Cart* (No. 80). Although the heavy summer foliage gives a sense of gloom, you should note the points of light; the white horses, white dog, glints of white and red in the figures, and the distant hill. A very charming picture.

J. R.
Cozens,
1752-1799

John Robert Cozens, the water-colourist, exercised a far-reaching influence over the landscape painters of the second half of the eighteenth century; he was one of Nature's intimates and taught others to search for those beauties which had been revealed to himself. Turner made no secret of the debt he owed to Cozens, and Constable called him "the greatest genius that ever touched landscape". Some good examples of his work may be seen at South Kensington.

John
Crome,
1768-1821

John Crome, better known as "Old Crome," is the next to claim a word of notice. Born in Norwich, the son of an inn-keeper, he never had any serious training in art. But his talent was considerable, and from Hobbema, his favourite painter, he learned much. He has a true eye, and wins us by the simple, truthful representations of the scenes he loved. Of Mousehold Heath he seems never to have wearied; and in the National Gallery picture (No. 689) the sense of boundless distance, of silence and solitude, which must have entered into his own being is very quickly communicated to us. Norwich is proud of her famous painter; he became the founder of a local School, and his best works are still to be found in his native county.

John
Constable,
1776-1837

John Constable, destined to greatness, was slow to discover his own gifts. The son of a rich mill-owner of East Bergholt in Suffolk, he felt the beauty of the turning sails of the mill, and the water that fell splashing and glistening from the grinding wheel. Some of his sketches were shown to Sir George Beaumont, then staying in the neighbourhood, and that enthusiastic lover of art was at once convinced of the boy's talent, and obtained his father's consent to a course of training in a London studio. But the arduous necessary drudgery repelled him. He returned for two years to the mill, but felt still unsettled, and finally at the age of twenty-four accepted his fate and

entered the Royal Academy as a student. His progress was slow, but being a close observer of Nature he learned more from her than from the Schools. He broke away entirely from the classic style of Wilson, observed with his own eyes, and painted with extreme realism the quiet scenery near his home in Dedham Vale. Every hedge, every stile, every haystack, every trifling irregularity of ground was faithfully rendered; the whole being so skilfully enlivened by the play of light and shade that the simplest everyday scene became in his hands a beautiful picture. His *White Horse* (now the property of Mr. Pierpont Morgan), exhibited in 1819, brought him tardy fame, and the associateship of the Royal Academy. In 1820 he moved to Hampstead, and from that time onward was reckoned one of the leading artists of the day.

In 1824 this uncompromising realist, this painter of purely English cultivated scenery, won his first triumph in France. Two of his pictures were exhibited in the Salon, and created a sensation. One of them, the now popular *Hay-Wain* (No. 1207 in our Gallery), excited the remark "C'est plein de rosée" (It is full of dew). It was a favourite device with Constable to scatter specks of white paint over his landscapes in order to get this silvery effect. Under his cloudy grey skies—so dear to his English heart—this "dew" sparkles in his pictures like raindrops, and gave rise to Fuseli's banter about the need of a great-coat and umbrella when looking at them. The National Gallery is very rich in examples of Constable's work. Our illustration shows the second picture which won so much praise in France. Constable writes of it to a friend: "My 'Lock' is now on my easel; it looks most beautifully silvery, windy, and delicious; it is all health in the absence of everything stagnant". This picture is now in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.¹

Constable used to say of himself that he wished to paint as though he had never seen a picture; and the interest of his landscapes lies in their unaffected truthfulness. We look on the scene itself; the personality of the painter is never obtruded. It was this extraordinary simplicity of outlook which aroused so much enthusiasm in France. There the new school of painters,

Pictures
exhibited
in Paris,
1824

Influence
on French
landscape
art

¹ See p. 282.

headed by Delacroix, were seeking in the chaos of ruined traditions for some guidance along the road to truth. We know them as the Romantic School (see p. 260) because they sought for personal adventures in their intercourse with Nature. Their ideals found expression later in the naturalistic work of the Barbizon School; and we have a right to regard Constable as the spiritual father of those "plein-air" painters.

Richard
Parkes
Bonington,
1801-1828

Yet so alien from our own was the French conception of style that a reconciling agent was required to convey across the Channel the full force of Constable's influence. This agent was Bonington, born a quarter of a century later than Constable, and dying nine years before him. Like a meteor he flashed and passed.

Bonington was born near Nottingham, but his family soon migrated to France, and at fifteen he became a student in the *École des Beaux Arts* at Paris. In technique he is a Frenchman and is claimed as a member of the French School. But he paid frequent visits to England, worshipped at the shrine of Constable, and looked at English scenery with the love of a true islander. It is this blend of English sentiment with French executive skill which gives such unique interest to his work. Bonington painted genre scenes as well as landscape, and there is no better collection of his works than that at Hertford House.

Joseph
Mallord
William
Turner,
1775-1851

Though born one year earlier than Constable, Turner outlived him, so we reserve his name for our concluding notice. The son of a London barber he was born at 26 Maiden Lane in the Covent Garden district. He came into the world with two supreme gifts; eyes that could see, and an imagination that could infuse poetic glamour into the objects of sight. Flowers and fruits of every hue were waiting for him on the Covent Garden market-stalls; a silvery Thames flowed near, gay with painted barges; and over all hung the hazy London sky which in a moment might be dyed pink or purple or blood-red by the rays of the setting sun. These things awoke in the boy an indomitable passion for beauty. Pencil and brush were soon at work and his little tinted drawings attracted the notice of his

father's customers. *Folly Bridge*, done at the age of twelve and sold for one shilling, may be seen in the water-colour room of the National Gallery. His father became interested in the boy's talent, and had him taught by various masters of indifferent ability. In 1789 he entered the Academy Schools and next year at the age of fifteen exhibited one of his drawings.

Turner was fortunate in his friendship with Thomas Girtin, Girtin, a young water-colour artist of his own age. The two rambled ¹⁷⁷⁵⁻¹⁸⁰² together in the country which then crept in closer to London than it does now, and on Sunday evenings they had stimulating talks with a certain hospitable and art-loving Dr. Monro. In his house Turner made acquaintance with the works of Claude and Wilson, but of infinitely more value as affecting his own genius were the sketches he saw there by J. R. Cozens (p. 276).

In 1797, stirred by the example of his friend Girtin who was ^{Tour in Yorkshire, 1797} making a name as a landscape painter, Turner made a tour in Yorkshire and Northumberland. His own first great success was *Norham Castle*, exhibited in 1798 at the Academy. By the year 1800 Turner's apprenticeship to art was over; he became a member of the Academy, settled in Harley Street, and never again lacked employment.

In 1802 Turner went abroad and first saw the Alps. No ^{On the Continent, 1802} one, in the true sense of the word, had seen them before; he was the first to transfer to canvas not only their rugged shapes but the elusive spirit of awe mingled with peace which dwells among them.

In 1819 Turner paid his first visit to Italy, and in classifying ^{In Italy, 1819} his work it is usual to regard the pictures painted after this date as belonging to his second or middle period.

It was probably in 1832 that Turner first saw Venice. The ^{At Venice, 1832} Alps had waited—this seems natural enough—for an Englishman to interpret their mysterious splendour to an unseeing world. But Venice had worn her beauty like a visible crown through the great years of the Renaissance; her own sons were amongst the greatest painters of their age, and yet none had immortalized her with his brush. Canaletto, of the eighteenth century, it is true, gives us valuable topographical views of the

city of his birth, but they are without expression and kindle no enthusiasm. To Turner Venice revealed herself as the dream-city for which since childhood he had been a-search. By his brush her beauty was at last made fully manifest to the world. Nearly every year after 1833 Turner exhibited some new picture of Venice, but it is in his water-colour sketches that he best interprets the ethereal and visionary appearance of the island-city rising from the sea.

Our illustration is from the oil painting in the Ionides Collection (No. 208) at South Kensington. The extreme beauty of the original will more than satisfy those who know Venice. In the foreground is the cool grey-green lagoon, in which gondolas and gaily dressed folk are reflected. To the left rises the snowy dome of Santa Maria della Salute; softly retreating into the background is the rosy-tinted frontage of the Doge's palace and the Piazza; while the Piazzetta pillars and the now lost Campanile fracture with their whiteness the intensely deep blue of the sky.

Failing
health,
1841

Up to 1841 Turner's activity was uninterrupted; in that year he spoke first of failing health and failing eyesight. It is possible that the vagueness of his latest style was due to these causes. Yet it is also true that he had long adopted a free unconventional style which offended many of his fellow-artists. He was a watchful observer of Nature and saw effects to which others were blind. We remember the puzzled lady who could not see what he saw in the sunset, and the quiet rejoinder: "Don't you wish, Madam, that you could!" So for a few years the work of Turner became the butt of ridicule and adverse criticism. Then from Oxford came the dauntless young champion who undertook to instruct the British Philistine (whether painter or layman) in the true principles of art. In 1843 appeared the first volume of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, followed later by the four others which complete the work. He obtained a hearing, he re-instated Turner in public esteem. The colder, more scientific critics of to-day look with disfavour on Ruskin; but those who study pictures for enjoyment only will find their enjoyment greatly enhanced by accepting

Ruskin's
Modern
Painters,
1843



VENICE

TURNER

Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. Ionides (Collection)

Ruskin as showman. It needs a poet to interpret a poet; and Ruskin was a passionate lover of Nature like Turner himself and understood his mental attitude.

In 1851 Turner's career closed in death. His private life ^{Death,} was in many of its details sordid, his personality was devoid ¹⁸⁵¹ of attraction, but his works remain as one of our most precious national treasures.

Only a very few can be mentioned of the multitudes of ^{His} pictures and sketches which are either in public or private ^{pictures} collections. In both mediums, water-colour and oil, Turner tried original experiments, with the unfortunate result that many of his works are now deteriorating under the action of time. But so prolific was his genius that a rich store of treasures remains.

The National Gallery possesses many in excellent condition, and we have examples of the three periods of his work.

This shows Turner's early manner, when his drawing was ^{The Sun} careful and his preference in colour was for low tones of grey ^{rising in a} and brown. It hangs, as Turner wished, in the French room ^{Mist (479)} beside Claude's *Queen of Sheba*, and forms a striking contrast in its faithful observation of nature to Claude's theatrical work. In the same year, 1807, Turner began, in imitation of Claude, his *Liber Studiorum*, a collection of engravings of his principal works. ¹⁸⁰⁷

Here we have one of Turner's very finest pictures. De- ^{Ulysses} spite its title it makes no attempt to tell a story—an inferior ^{deriding} form of art for which he had no liking—but its aim is to give a ^{Poly-} grand effect of colour. It is magnificently decorative and also ^{phemus} a triumph of imaginative sentiment. On its exhibition in 1829 ^{(508), 1829} a fellow-artist mockingly said of it, "Splendide mendax" (a splendid lie). He did not understand that Turner was translating in paint the vehemence of intense emotion. Ulysses has just escaped from the Cyclops and death; the splendid tints of the sunrise express the dawn of a recovered freedom. The harsher reds of the full-sailed boats seem to accentuate the note of defiance. The whole glowing canvas is a lyric of

the giddiness of joy. Accepted as such we feel that it is "splendid truth".

The
Fighting
Téméraire
(524), 1839

Exhibited ten years later we have a companion lyric in *The Fighting Téméraire tugged to her Last Berth*. Its theme is simple; and as Leonardo expresses it (p. 74), the picture "sets forth instantly before the eye" what words can never say. Yet we do stumbly give speech to our thought. The grand old ship had been so valiantly terrible to the enemy at Trafalgar that her own men had given her the added name of the "fighting" *Téméraire*. But she will fight no more. Henry Newbolt, the poet, has sung her dirge in verse. Turner's dirge makes its mutely eloquent appeal direct to the eye. He has infused so deep a sense of solemnity into this picture that it becomes a symbol of the close of life. Man sees in it the quiet dignity and beauty which may mark the passing away of a human soul. Contrast this with Poussin's dismal conception of the end of life under the figure of the Deluge (see p. 249); and in pictorial rendering the gloom of his low tones with the splendour of colour before us here.

Ancient
Rome
(523),
1839.

Of a different and quieter splendour than this is the picture entitled *Ancient Rome: Agrippina landing with the ashes of Germanicus*. Devoid altogether of human interest—for Agrippina is but a blur of paint among other shadowed blurs of paint in a corner of the picture—this vision of radiant colour has the potency of a wizard's spell. Faintly the moon rides in the pale blue sky, and rising to meet her is a white city of dreams; domed roofs creep downward (faintly outlined) terrace by terrace to the river which winds in gentle curves away to the unknown sea. Or, looking first at the foreground, we may imagine (for a moment) that this is some scene of earth; but soon we are steeped in a mood of unearthliness and peace. Over the whole broods the glow of a sunset that can never die. This is the triumph of the artist's genius,—to silence conscious thought, and hold us long in a kind of trance.

The School of Painting which bears on its register the names of Reynolds and Gainsborough, of Constable and Turner, may well claim equal rank with any in Europe.



A LOCK
 CONSTABLE
Burlington House, London
See p. 277



THE FIGHTING TÊMÉRAIRE TUGGED TO HER LAST BERTH
 TURNER
National Gallery, London

Our audacious survey of the centuries concludes here. We have travelled as it were in an aeroplane, over vast regions of the thought-world of our race, noting salient points, and casting anchor now and again near some famous spot. We have found our bearings, and gathered incidentally some fragments of rudimentary information. The time has come for closer personal exploration—on foot—of those districts which may have appeared attractive. The local guide-book becomes indispensable. Monographs by specialists must now be studied; galleries must be visited.

For our books must lead us to the pictures themselves. They have outlived the centuries because the germ of immortality was imparted to them by their creators. They exhibit the workings of the mind of man, which, in its essence, is indestructibly the same in every age. They have power to stir the coldest imagination, and to bring added brightness into the tamest lot in life. In Matthew Arnold's phrase, they "abide our question": and according to the measure of our determination to understand, will be the liberality of their reply. It indeed implies descent to pass from the company of the immortals whose patent of nobility has been confirmed by the hand of Time to the later men whose work, because so near to us, is less irrevocably judged and placed. But so full of interest are many of the new developments in painting that a few notes on them are added in an Appendix.

These developments illustrate the laws of growth and inevitable change. At the same time they prove the underlying law of continuity controlling the life of every race: no so-called breach with the past is a complete breach; the wildest innovators are linked, consciously or unconsciously, with some presiding source of influence derived from the work of their predecessors. In every country the various schools are less distinctive than they were; the world is shrinking, we tend to become more cosmopolitan. Yet our own art does retain much of its sturdy insular detachment from foreign influence, and in that lies the promise of a fresh and vigorous interpretation of the beliefs, the questionings, and the hopes of our own age.

		SCHOOLS OF TUSCANY	CENTRAL & NORTH ITALY	VENETIA	FLANDERS
Dante.	1300				
Edward III.	10				
Chaucer.	20				
	30				
	40				
	50				
Wycliffe.	60				
	70				
	80				
	90				
Henry V.	100				
	20				
	30				
Printing.	40				
Constantinople taken by Turks.	50				
Louis XI.	60				
Savonarola.	70				
	80				
	90				
Henry VIII.	100				
	20				
Luther.	30				
Charles V.	40				
	50				
Elizabeth. Philip II.	60				
Revolt of Netherlands.	70				
Shakespeare.	80				
	90				
	100				
Thirty Years' War.	10				
Charles I.	20				
	30				
	40				
Louis XIV.	50				
Milton.	60				
	70				
	80				
William III.	90				
Spanish Succession War {	100				
Anne.	10				
George I.	20				
Louis XV.	30				
Frederick the Great.	40				
	50				
George III.	60				
Louis XVI.	70				
Independence of United States.	80				
French Revolution.	90				
	100				
Napoleon I.	10				
Waterloo.	20				
English Reform Bill.	30				
Victoria.	40				
	50				
Napoleon III.	60				
	70				

APPENDIX A

POST-REVOLUTION PAINTERS IN FRANCE

It was Delacroix (p. 260), the greatest of the Romantics, who broke the shackles of a classic tradition which was impeding the new impulse towards life—new life and fuller—which had been generated by the French Revolution. Yet he never lost his head; in his great pictures we find strength, imagination, a passionate regard for form, but never a sign of the licence which marks some of the later Schools.

In Monticelli (1824-1886), a spirit apart, working out unaided his own colour-problems, we have a precursor of the brilliant colourists of the Impressionist Movement.

In Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) we have the uncompromising revolutionary, mocking at the restraints of tradition, and painting with headlong gusto the wildest scenes of violence and vice—a source of barbaric energy from which others have drawn strength.

Courbet (1819-1877), a twin-revolutionary, is by some regarded as the “real inspirer of modern art;” but Daumier is now hailed as the precursor of the most recent development of all—Post Impressionism. Human nature in the rough was the chosen domain of both. Ugliness and vulgarity caused no repulsion. They could see no poetry, as Millet did, in the life of the toiling multitudes either in the city or on the land. They painted it with a sort of bitter delight. They established the new canon that no department of life is unsuited for treatment in art.

THE IMPRESSIONIST MOVEMENT

The Impressionist Movement was in its origin strictly scientific, being engaged in the study of how certain visible effects, chiefly those of light and colour, could be more successfully achieved in paint. Light itself was reduced to its elements, the seven colours of the rainbow. Therefore two leading rules of the new technique were that only those seven pure colours were to be used without previous admixture on the palette; and (2) they were to be laid direct on the canvas in separate strokes, or even in dots; and this method (at a distance) would produce to the eye the effect of sunlight. Another device was the moderating of these colours in intensity according to the distance from the eye of the various

objects in the picture ; so that instead of sharp outlines thrown into relief by shadow there should be a more uniform brilliance of colour, while the retreating position of the objects was indicated by their colour "value." The paint was to be laid on a pure white ground to increase the effect of luminosity. The law underlying the rules was that every picture was to be painted in the open air during one special period of the day, so as to secure the exact quality of light imposed during that period. The strictest observer of this rule was Claude Monet (1840-), the originator, it is believed, of the word "Impressionist."

Some of the earliest productions of these pioneers were startling and odd, and the presiding authorities of the French "Salon" refused absolutely to recognize the Movement. It was in 1863 that the Emperor, Napoleon III, intervened, and procured for these eccentrics one special room for their exhibits—a room soon nicknamed the "Salon des Refusés." One picture, a sunset, by Monet, bore the title *An Impression*, and very soon the name "Impressionist" was adopted by the bewildered spectators for all the members of this new "School."

Edouard Manet (1832-1883), a strong personality, soon became its acknowledged leader ; while accepting only partially the theories about colour-division, it was by his deliberate choice of every-day realistic subjects, by his refusal to throw them up into relief by the use of shadow, and especially by his careful observation of colour *values*, that he set at defiance the technique insisted on by academic conventions. He was chiefly a figure painter, and welcomed as just appreciation the comment of a fellow-artist that his figures were as rigid in their appearance as the kings and queens on playing cards.

His earlier work had been less pronouncedly a protest against academic rules ; it had drawn inspiration from the work of Velazquez and Goya. As the conflict with the Academy authorities continued, his attitude hardened, and his work hardened. But by his personal courage he forged a way to freedom for many a timid follower, and did establish and compel recognition for all that was of real value in the new discoveries.

Edgar Degas (1834-1917), who is generally classed with the Impressionists, excelled as a draughtsman rather than as a colourist, and confined his attention almost exclusively to the representation of ballet-girls. As studies of attitude, movement, and the play of light over the dancing figures, these pictures are extraordinarily interesting.

Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) succeeds nearly always in admitting a certain measure of charm into his pictures. He had travelled in Italy and fallen under the spell of Raphael. As contrasted with Manet he exercises selection, and paints chiefly groups of women of

the well-to-do classes: for example *At the Piano* where we see one girl about to play, and another over-looking the sheet of music; or *In the Box*, where mother and daughter in evening dress are enjoying the theatre. There is nothing typically "impressionistic" in his presentment of his subjects; only the new freedom from formal design, which suggests a transcript from nature.

About Claude Monet (1840-) it is difficult to speak in measured terms, he has so triumphantly expressed for us all the mystery and also the dazzling glory of the world of Nature. He accepts the whole theory of the division of colour, applying it in broken touches (not in dots) and bringing out in full the marvellous brilliance effected by the correct juxta-position and contrasting of his seven colours. Very patiently he studied the transforming power of light; one famous series of the same hay-stack at each consecutive hour of the day is often mentioned. During the Franco-German War of 1870 Monet, accompanied by Camille Pissaro (also an Impressionist painter) was in England; he saw some of Turner's pictures and we may be sure understood them and drew in from them inspiration for his own work. In his greater pictures Monet intuitively exercises selection, so that irrelevant features in the landscape vanish, and the few that remain assume the appearance of a balanced design, and are full of vital expression. One writer (M. Maclair) likens his pictures to "great poems". M. Monet still lives, and continues to create them. We may add here that all these searchers into the nature and the pictorial value of light were well acquainted with the Dutch painters who had already dealt with the problem. The influence of Vermeer of Delft, the Magician (page 202), played a leading part in the Impressionist Movement.

Georges Seurat (1859-1891) and Paul Signac made a special study of light and the spectrum, and very strictly carried out in their paintings the new rules resulting from their scientific research. They adopted the method, known as "Pointillism," of applying their pure colours in dots or points. The work of Seurat was specially full of promise; his early death is to be regretted.

Alfred Sisley (1839-1899), an Englishman by parentage, but born in France and as a rule living there, was another consistent colour-divisionist. His pictures have a delicate charm that reflects the influence of Claude Monet.

At the opening of the twentieth century we have a trio, Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh, who are generally accredited with inaugurating the later movement, rather loosely designated "Post-impressionism". Paul Cézanne (1836-1906) was a solitary worker, living quietly in the south of France and striving with laborious patience to "realize" on his canvas the scenes or the persons he painted. It was a constant loving endeavour to give life to what he saw that

seems to have actuated all his work. He sought neither fame nor money. He rejected the scientific rules of the Impressionists, but he produced pictures that are full of a strange *suggestion* of life, yet have no kind of affinity with the imitative accuracy of a photograph. His *Card-players*, for instance, only roughly delineated, are what we might almost describe as "uncannily" human. It has been said of him that "he lived to paint". And his ambition was (in his own words) "to make of Impressionism something solid and durable like the art of the Old Masters".

Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) was no humble, patient student, desirous, like Cézanne, of "realizing" his subjects with something of the old classic spirit. He began life as a banker, and, after a short training in the use of paint under Camille Pissaro (1830-1903) struck out a line of his own. Although Pissaro's is an honoured name in the list of Impressionists, Gauguin spoke later of having had to "unlearn all the tomfoolery he had acquired" in his studio. Gauguin had a dashing way of getting his figures simplified (actually out-lined) and transferring them in massive groups on to his canvas. He worked first in Brittany among the seafaring peasants, and later deliberately shook himself free from the many "tomfooleries" of civilization, and spent his days in the torrid zone of the southern hemisphere painting the aborigenes of Tahiti. There is something fine in this work of his: the brown natives are not unlike roughly hewn figures blocked out in stone. Gauguin, with a strain of dark blood in him, seems to have found himself out there—and his paintings have found a market in Europe.

Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890), ardent lover of his fellowmen, pathetically distrustful of his own gifts, forms a striking contrast to the arrogant Gauguin. By birth a Dutchman (p. 224) and trained for a time under the sound guidance of Anton Mauve, Van Gogh in 1886 joined his brother Theodore in Paris. Gradually he accepted his destiny as a painter, but he never gained complete control over his brush. In 1888 he migrated to sunny southern France, and then gave himself, with a kind of fury, to his work. "I want to paint humanity, humanity, and again humanity" was his "*cri du cœur*"—but chiefly it was landscape, and man lost in it, that he seemed to see. His *Reaper* should be compared with Millet's *Reaper* to understand the different attitude of the two painters. In technique Van Gogh practised the division of colours, but not in dots; he used sweeping strokes from a fully loaded brush, sometimes even pressing out his paint direct from the tube.

Gauguin was with him at Arles for a time, a pitiless mocker of his many hot enthusiasms; and assuredly the root-cause of his nervous break-down. But there was one good day when both travelled in a little local omnibus over to Montpellier, and stood calmed and rever-

ent before the collection there of pictures by Delacroix. They felt his power, his classic restraint: an incident I think pathetically suggestive of the hunger for repose and moderation which gnaws at the heart of our age of anarchy.

Two attempts on the life of Gauguin broke up the temporary partnership, and Van Gogh ended his short and passionate career in an asylum. The story is told, with the vividness of an artist in words, by Mr. Julius Meier-Graefe.

From Cézanne and Gauguin, rather than from this ardent meteoric spirit, the younger generation seems to be drawing inspiration. But eccentricities apparently are on the increase, Cubism and Vorticism, and other strange portents. We look still for leadership along some more stable route of advance.

APPENDIX B

PAINTING IN ENGLAND AFTER 1850

DERIVING from Constable (page 276), acknowledged both in England and France as the true parent of Naturalism, we may mention as painters of note, John Sell Cotman (1782-1842), of the Norwich School, a frequent exhibitor in the Royal Academy; and David Cox (1783-1859), remembered and valued for his delightful water-colours. There are examples of their work in the National Gallery. Peter de Wint (1784-1847), a Staffordshire man, produced works in oils, and he too excelled in water-colours. There is an interesting set of examples in this medium in the South Kensington Museum. The work of Frederick Walker (1840-1875) is so well known in reproductions that we need only to remind the reader that, even in his homely subjects *The Vagrants*, *The Wayfarers*, *The Harbour of Refuge* he gives us figures of a dignified classic type, and that he is noted for the richness of his colour. There is one example in the National Gallery, *The Plough* (No. 3158).

In 1848, the year of Revolutions, that curiously interesting group of vehement young men known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood sprang into being. Holman Hunt (1827-1910), who afterwards wrote the history of the movement, claims to have been the founder. He certainly was responsible for most of the new art-creed in obedience to which its members were to work. They were to reject all the accumulated knowledge derived from the Italians and embodied in the teaching of the Academy Schools. They were to observe Nature for themselves, and with the utmost precision to reproduce on their canvas what they saw. Their colours were to be pure, and the prepared ground on which they were laid was to be white—not as hitherto a dark brown. Here we notice a prevision of

the French Impressionist creed. But they differed from the French in attaching importance to subject, and were like the original Pre-Raphael Italian primitives — it was Hunt's professed aim that their pictures should have an ethical or distinctly religious purpose. Hunt himself was the only one who kept strictly to the rules; and as an artist he was the least gifted. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), greater perhaps as a poet than as a painter, did in the early days of the P.R.B. create some enchanting pictures. *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin* and the *Annunciation* in the National Gallery still hold the affections of those who have once loved them. Sir John Millais (1829-1896), endowed with imagination, his eye quick to observe, his hand skilled in the use of the brush, was the one great artist of the group; and his pictures painted in accordance with the P.R.B. rules have a convincing attraction, and may be described as Poems in Paint. *Christ in the Home of his Parents* in the Tate Gallery; *Autumn Leaves* in the Manchester Gallery, and *Sir Isumbras at the Ford*, now at Port Sunlight, will always stir the feelings of those who ask from a picture something more than is presented to the eye. When Millais, breaking away from Pre-Raphaelism, became enamoured of paint for its own sake (as in *A Souvenir of Velazquez* in the Diploma Gallery) and worked for money and kudos he lost for ever the "vision splendid" of his youth and followed in later years the "light of common day." Holman Hunt (1827-1910), sometimes described as the "Puritan Painter," has left works which will I believe always exercise a powerful influence on the lay-public. To the critics they are bad art. To simpler folk they are full of interest, and speak in a language easy to understand. *The Light of the World* is a universal favourite. *The Scapegoat*, which I once saw in the Leicester Gallery, is a picture never to be forgotten. Hunt took infinite pains to achieve accuracy; travelled to Palestine, selected his goat, took it with him into the desolate region bordering on the Dead Sea, and painted it with the faithfulness prescribed by his own rules. The pathos, the loneliness of that strange creature, driven out and laden with the sins of the released and purged Jewish congregation (such was its awful fate) has been rendered with extraordinary power. *The Triumph of the Innocents*, in the Manchester Gallery is a wonderful picture. Here imagination may, we grant, have outstripped legitimate pictorial presentment; but none of the Old Masters have given so original a conception of the subject, and it will never fail to appeal to the general public.

Linked with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood is the name of Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893), although himself never a member. But he too painted with Dutch-like precision the object as it appeared to the eye. And he too acknowledged that the subject of a picture

should be of serious interest. His *Christ washing St. Peter's Feet*, (No. 1394 in the National Gallery) is a typical example. His *Last of England* in the Birmingham Gallery, and his *Work* in Manchester are even more representative of his democratic attitude towards life, and the laborious attention to detail which allies him to the P.R.B.

Following these we have Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898), an original painter who was fired by the early poetic pictures of Rossetti, in whose studio for a short time he received some training. Otherwise he was self-taught, yet became a fine draughtsman and a delicately discerning colourist. It is true that the type of human beauty he affected is morbid, and makes less appeal than formerly to public taste. But his gift of mystical imagination bestows on every work from his hand an enduring interest.

George Frederick Watts (1817-1904) is a striking and solitary figure, allied in sentiment with the Pre-Raphaelites' insistence on the choice of a serious subject, but sharing none of their theories about realistic representation. As a colourist he vies with the Venetians; as the creator of a new language in symbolism he is one of the outstanding characters of the Victorian era. He was self-taught, deriving his conception of ideal beauty from the Greek marbles in the British Museum; and as a painter of the nude he achieved in consequence a high degree of purity and grace in his treatment of the human form. He defies classification under any known group-label. His allegories in paint sometimes border on mystification, but the greater number plainly express their own meaning. It is worth remembering in these days when Watts is under-valued that a great French critic (I think Fromentin) was so much struck with the Burlington House Exhibition of his works in 1905 as to declare that the age of symbolism was not dead. The technical excellence of his painting is universally acknowledged. Perhaps *Hope, Love and Life*, and the impressive *Love and Death* are the best known and most sincerely admired of his pictures.

Although in England the theories of the French Impressionists were never adopted in their entirety, they naturally exercised a certain degree of influence. Among living artists I find in Mr. Charles Marriott's valuable book, *Modern Movements in Painting*, that he gives the names of Mr. Frank Brangwyn, Mr. John Sargent, Mr. David Murray, Mr. George Clausen, and Mr. Armesby Brown as painters whose work shows indebtedness to the tenets of Impressionism. The two last-named, who practise divisionism of colours, give us pictures so essentially English, so delightfully free from mannerisms or exaggeration, that I am sure no one can detect in them any note of "cosmopolitanism". In his remarks on J. McNeil Whistler, the American artist who for a time had a following in this country, Mr. Marriott shows convincingly the mischievous results of

this quality. He writes: "One has only to remember Whistler's writing and speaking, as well as his works, to see that 'cosmopolitanism' is only the, so to speak, geographical name for the philosophical defect of his art. It is art divorced from life and depending entirely upon culture. To Whistler more than anybody we owe the conception of the 'artist' as a specialized person, apart from his craft, which has done so much to prejudice the whole character of modern Art."¹ True words; but not necessarily deterrent to the enjoyment of much of Whistler's work.

Arrived now in the twentieth century we are in the midst here, as in France, of a movement antagonistic to Impressionism; the vague word "Post-Impressionism" may be accepted as covering its various aspects. I cannot undertake to criticize this contemporary movement. But we may note that "The New English Art Club," founded in 1886, aimed at a revolt against academic tradition in the same way that Manet and his friends revolted against the authorities of the Paris Salon. And in the half-yearly Exhibitions of this Society we may watch the new theories about picture-making at work. The aims of these theories seems to be chiefly in the direction of "non-representational" art. A clumsy word, but expressive. For, so far as I can gather, a geometrical pattern, consisting of lines, angles, circles (and possibly other conic sections) is first to be constructed, and into it are to be inserted the "significant forms"—human or otherwise—which suit the fancy of the painter. The completed picture is to be regarded as *Music* rather than *Vision*.

This definition accords ill with that given by Signor Benedetto Croce² in his masterly study, *The Essence of Æsthetic*. To the question, "What is art?" he replies: "I will say at once in the simplest manner that art is *vision*, or *intuition*. The artist produces an image or a phantasm; and he who enjoys art turns his gaze upon the point which the artist has indicated, looks through the chink which he has opened, and reproduces that image in himself." It is these visions presented by the genius of the artist that give us pictures which live.

Nothing can alter the truth that the only begetter of great works of art is great emotion; and the resulting desire to *eternize* emotion strains towards conscious utterance. Feeling and thought combined give us the pictures which not only lay hold on the imagination, but continue to live with an indestructible life in the memory.

¹ *Modern Movements in Painting*. By Charles Marriott. (Chapman & Hall.)

² *The Essence of Æsthetic*, by Benedetto Croce. (Heinemann.)

BOOKS RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER READING

- Italian Schools of Painting.* Kugler. Murray, £1 16s.
German, Flemish, and Dutch Schools of Painting. Kugler. Murray,
 £1 16s.
History of Painting in Italy. Crowe and Cavalcaselle. Murray, 6 vols.,
 £1 5s. each.
Sketches of the History of Christian Art. Lord Lindsay. J. Murray.
Painters of Florence. Mrs. Ady. Murray. 2s. 6d.
Sacred and Legendary Art. Mrs. Jameson. Longmans, £1 5s.
Legends of the Madonna. Mrs. Jameson. Hutchinson, 7s. 6d. and 2s. 6d.
Mornings in Florence. Ruskin. Allen and Unwin, 3s. 6d.
The Queen of the Air (and many others). Ruskin. Allen and Unwin,
 2s. 6d.
Modern Painters. Ruskin. Allen and Unwin, 6 vols., 2s. 6d. each.
Early Tuscan Art. Conway. O.P.
Study and Criticism of Italian Art. Berenson. Bell, First, Second, and
 Third Series (illustrated), 15s. each.
Venetian Painters of the Renaissance. Berenson. Putnam, 7s. 6d.
Florentine Painters of the Renaissance. Berenson. Putnam, 7s. 6d.
Central Italian Painters of the Renaissance. Berenson. Putnam, 7s. 6d.
Early Flemish Artists. Conway. Seeley. O.P.
Great Masters of Dutch and Flemish Painting. Bode. Duckworth. O.P.
French Impressionists. C. Mauclair. Duckworth, 2s. 6d.
Looking at Pictures. S. C. Kaines Smith. Methuen, 6s.
The British School. E. V. Lucas. Methuen, 6s. O.P.
How to Look at Pictures. R. C. Witt. Bell, 7s. 6d.
The National Gallery. 100 plates in colour. A sound modern work.
 Konody, Brockwell, and Lippmann. Jack, £2 2s.
Colour: Masterpieces of Modern Art. Marriott. Colour and Co.,
 £1 1s. O.P.
The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Ford Madox Hueffer. Duckworth, 3s. 6d.
Martyrs and Saints. Mrs. Rundle Charles. S.P.C.K., 3s. 6d.
The Saints in Art. M. E. Tabor. Methuen, 6s.
Classics of Art. Various writers and prices. Methuen, 15s. to 30s. each

MONOGRAPHS ON PAINTERS

The "Portfolio" Series. Seeley, Service and Co., 7s. 6d. and 4s. 6d.

The Great "Artists" Series. Velazquez (only). Bell, 5s.

The Library of Art. Duckworth, 7s. 6d. each.

The Popular Library of Art. Duckworth, 3s. each.

Little Books on Art. (Ed. C. Davenport.) Methuen, 5s. each.

Masterpieces in Colour. (Ed. Leman Hare). Jack, 2s. 6d. each.

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In italics are names of pictures and books; also foreign words and technical terms. These latter are explained on pages indicated. Pictures entered in List of Illustrations do not recur in Index. Abbreviations used: B.M. for British Museum, H.C. for Hampton Court, H.H. for Hertford House (Wallace Collection), N.G. for National Gallery.

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Metsu. Ladies framed
Maes. in window

de Hooch. Light + shade

Vermeer. Light

Steen. Pubs.

Ostade.

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